



ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

1400 MARKET ST, WILLIAMPORT, PA 17701

570-323-7309 * E-Mail: info@stlukeweb.com

St. Luke Online: www.stlukeweb.com

February

2026 NEWSLETTER

From the Pastor's Desk

February 2026

"For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." – Galatians 2:19-20

I have struggled with overeating all of my life. Losing weight has never been a struggle for me, but keeping the weight off has. I have lost significant amounts of weight roughly half a dozen times in my life. But every time I did it, I would lapse back into poor eating habits and gain it all back, usually shortly after the loss stopped.

On April 1, 2024, I decided to try something new: intermittent fasting. There are various ways of doing it, but the method I choose was to go 16 straight hours without eating and then allowing myself an 8 hour eating window every day (for the record, my window was 8:00 am until 4:00 pm). Not only did it work (I lost 40 pounds!), but for the first time in my life, I was able to sustain it. Since losing the weight, I do a slightly shorter fast every day, and it has helped me to hover at around the same weight for over a year.

I want to be very clear: I am **not** writing about this to brag, nor do I necessarily wish to encourage you to follow this method. It isn't for everyone, and it's always a good idea to consult with a health professional (not your pastor!) before engaging in any significant dietary change. I believe, however, that some of the insights I gained from this experience are applicable to our spiritual lives, especially as we enter the season of Lent.

In the early centuries of Christianity, new converts to the faith were expected to undergo an intense period of preparation, which could last as long as a few years. The final forty days leading to baptism (on Easter) were an especially intense time of spiritual discipline: particularly involving prayer and fasting. Over time, the church began to value this period of preparation not only for new members, but as an opportunity for spiritual renewal among both long time members and those who had fallen away. Thus, the season of Lent was born as a time of spiritual preparation.

How does my diet fit into all of this? One of the things that I found to be the most helpful about intermittent fasting is that it drew attention to the unhealthy patterns of eating I had fallen into. I ate when I was hungry, of course. But I also ate when I was bored, when I was stressed, and when I was depressed. I was using food to fulfill purposes that food can never fulfill. Instituting a fast in the evening when I was often less busy (and on my own), helped me to avoid eating more than my body needed during the times that I was most prone to do so. But it did two additional things in particular: it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my unhealthy habits, and it created in me a greater appreciation for what food can do for me. By the end of each fasting period, I found myself craving, not just a meal, but a nutritious one that would provide new energy.

Spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting can provide similar benefits. They can help us become more aware of our own limitations and weaknesses, giving us insight into the patterns of destructiveness that arise out of our sin. But the good news is that these disciplines can also point us to (and even help us crave) the new possibilities offered to us in Jesus Christ.

The season of Lent is an invitation for us to enter into a time of spiritual practice that can deepen our faith. But our approach to those practices is key. Whatever way you choose to observe the season, I encourage you to do it with humility and expectation, seeking –in the words of the apostle Paul – “the one who loved and gave himself for us.”

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff".

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS will be posted on the church website (stlukeweb.com), and our FACEBOOK page.



FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Our upcoming Lenten services will again this year incorporate meditative music, stillness and silence through the simplicity of Taize. This style of worship seeks to be impactful to bring reconciliation and peace amidst a distracted, noisy world. I hope you may be able to join us for one or more of these evenings as we meditate and pause our busy lives worshipping our Lord and Savior through still, small sounds.

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS:

- 6:00PM soup & fellowship followed by
- 7:00PM service:

February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, March 25

Taizé
A SIMPLE SERVICE
OF PRAYER, MUSIC,
THE WORD
& REFLECTIONS



Becky Ciabattari

SERVING AT THE WORSHIP SERVICE

8:00 AM:

Lector/Administrant: *Feb 1st – Ed Kelley; Feb 8th – Ed Kelley; Feb 15th – Ed Kelley; Feb 22nd – Nancy McCarty*

10:30 AM:

Altar Care: *February – Sondra Fisher; March – Cindy Belles*

Assisting Ministers: *Feb 1st – Charles Mahler; Feb 8th – Marilyn Eshleman; Feb 15th – Mark Bergren; Feb 22nd – Laura McNassor*

Lectors: *Feb 1st – Wilma Reeder; Feb 8th – Melanie Taormina; Feb 15th – Diana Bailey; Feb 22nd – Brad Nason*

Communion Helpers: *Feb 1st – Patricia Durand; Feb 8th – Janice Ogurcak; Feb 15th – Susan Horn; Feb 22nd – Charles Mahler*

Greeters: *Feb 1st – Karen & Mark Bergren; Feb 8th – Cindy & Terry Belles; Feb 15th – Sue Beidler; Feb 22nd – Ruth Croyle*

Ushers: *Feb 1st – Jere Eshleman; Feb 8th – Boy Scouts Sunday; Feb 15th – Rod Strother; Feb 22nd – David Briggs*

Acolyte: *Feb 1st – Lily Judge; Feb 8th – Luke Edmonds; Feb 15th – Wyatt Judge; Feb 22nd – Daniel Taormina*

Live Stream Assistant: *Feb 1st – Brad Nason; Feb 8th – Charles Mahler; Feb 15th – Daniel Taormina; Feb 22nd – Dan Taormina*

Offering Counters: *Feb 1st – Nancy McCarty & Marilyn Eshleman; Feb 8th – Terry Belles & Sondra Fisher; Feb 15th – Terry Belles will be training Thomas Spitzer & Charles Duchman, Jr.; Feb 22nd – Sue Beidler & Marilyn Eshleman*

FROM THE OFFICE

Office Coordinator, *Karen Spencer* will be out of the office from Feb. 9th – 13th. During office work hours Pastor Jeff and a volunteer will be available to assist you.

AFTER hours: If you are in need of emergency pastoral care, please call Pastor LeCrone directly at 570-220-3631.

INVITATION TO: Shrove Tuesday Fellowship



Once again, St. Mark's is inviting our St. Luke congregation to join them for their "Shrove Tuesday" being observed on February 17 with their annual "Fastnacht Day" or Donut Day event. We are invited to join them in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 5:30 pm for light refreshments and Fastnachts (of course!) This year, their Men's Fellowship Group decided to try their hand at making "homemade" fastnachts, so come and enjoy the fellowship of frying up dough into delicious donuts for an added bonus to this evening!

The event also includes gathering in the courtyard to burn last year's palms for ashes to be used as ashes for repentance and mortality on Ash Wednesday. Our time together will conclude with a brief liturgy of prayer and praise as we "Bury the Alleluia" in preparation for Lent. This promises to be a day of fellowship and meaning as we prepare to begin our Lenten pilgrimage in anticipation of the Easter Season. They are looking forward to seeing you!



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 A Lectionary. I hope to see you there!

If you want to look at our course materials, all of the Lessons are available here: <https://elca.org/Resources/Bible-Studies> (we are in Lectionary Year A). 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 570.323-7309 or Charles Mahler at Mahler@lycoming.edu .

PRAYER CHAIN UPDATE If you or someone you know needs prayer, please call Cindy Belles at 570-419-1363 or Karen Bergren at 570-220-3201 to start the prayer chain. If you want the name to be on the bulletin prayer list call the church office at 570-323-7309.

SEW FINE QUILTERS - Come join the fun for our *First Quilt Day for 2026* making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, the Gate House, Shepherd of the Streets, and Project Linus. Please join us on **Monday, Feb 2nd from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm in Bell Hall**. Come and go as your time permits. No quilting experience is needed! **BYOB – Bring Your Own BAG packed with a lunch – beverages will be provided by the church.** Any questions call Cindy Belles at 570-419-1363.

SHAWL MINISTRY When members or friends of the congregation experience trying times or milestones of great joy, we present them with a prayer shawl as a visible sign of our prayers for them. Shawls can be knitted at monthly meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (Sept.-May) or any time at home. **The next meeting is on Tuesday, February 17th from 9:30 am -12 noon in the Lounge. All are welcome!** Any questions, call Nancy McCarty 570-419-7827.

PARISH VISITATION CORP (PVC) meets next on **Tuesday, February 3, 2026 in the Library at 2:00PM**. Any questions, please contact Cindy Belles.

SERVING (Lectors, Assistant Minister, Communion Helper, or Live Stream Assistants) 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 or Pastor Jeff at 570-323-7309.

GREETERS Anyone interested in serving as a greeter, please contact the church office at 570-323-7309.

USHERS Anyone interested in serving as an usher, please contact Nancy McCarty - nmac7149@gmail.com or 570- 419-7827 or the church office at 570-323-7309.



FROM THE FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY Please consider volunteering for Coffee Hour! All coffee, tea, paper products, etc. are in the kitchen. Volunteers are asked to provide snacks, such as muffins, donuts, cookies, etc. Please contact Ruth Croyle at 570-433-3873 or Jeanne Yaggi at 570-329-6980 if you would like us to help you set up for Coffee Hour or if you have any questions.



ONGOING COLLECTIONS AT ST. LUKE



DANIEL'S CLOSET needs your help! Seasonal clothing and accessories are needed for all ages, from infant through adult. **Seasonal clothing (no summer clothing at this time and please 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 or items can be taken directly to Redeemer Lutheran Church at 1101 Washington Blvd., Williamsport.

THE FOOD PANTRY Your help is desperately needed! Food supplies are very low. Below is a list of items that the UCLC Food Pantry needs:

Coffee and Tea bags
White Sugar and Brown Sugar
Boxed Potatoes
Wide Egg Noodles & Ramon Noodles
Alfredo Sauce
Canned Chicken & Canned Tuna
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Cake Mixes & Frosting

Hamburger Helper
Canned Spam & Canned Ham
Beef Stew & Saltine Crackers
Flour, Salt & Pepper
Small Mayonnaise
Canned Beets & Canned Carrots
Pork & Beans and Hearty Soups
Canned Pineapple

These items are collected in our West entryway. After office hours' drop-offs: Bell Hall foyer entrance. Items in **BOLD UNDERLINED** are needed the most.

SEAFARERS - 2026

Seafarers Christmas totes for 2026- Service Ministry is collecting men's hoodies - sweatshirt-(no zippers) sizes L & XL—any color - **BUT white** please. For cargo ship's crew members. We have the t- shirts- L- 22 ct. and XL- 38ct. Men's crew work socks are needed- 3 prs. for each tote. Colors- white/ grey/ black.

The hats/ cowls are hand knitted/ crocheted. Busy hands are working on 50 sets for 2026!!

Sweatshirts- hooded or not, drop off at the church office. Committee plans to assemble Seafarer Christmas tote bags in July.

Any donations are greatly appreciated. Times have changed- no white elephant sales in January!!



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 18th at 7:00pm in the Nave

St Luke Lutheran Church, 1400 Market St, Williamsport, PA 17701

MIDWEEK LENTEN SUPPER & SERVICE

Wednesdays during Lent (February 25th, and March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th)

Join us at 6:00 PM for a simple supper of salad, soup, and bread; followed by a 7:00PM service in the nave.

Note: Volunteer to provide food by signing up on one of the weekly sign-up sheets, located in the West Hall. (starting on 2/18)

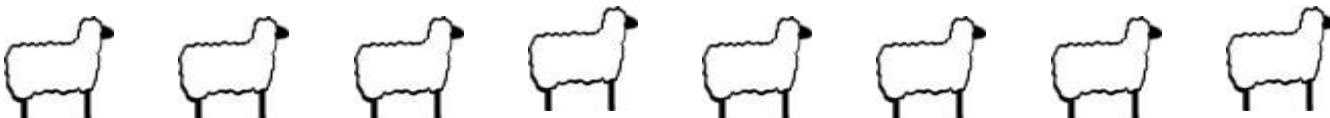
SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS SUNDAY

S.O.S SUNDAY We will welcome the Rev. Mark Brumbach to preach at both services on **Sunday, February 15, 2026**, and he will join us at the coffee hour to follow the late service.

It's also time to open our hearts and show our love to those less fortunate in our community who are helped by the Shepherd of the Streets. Our economy and budget cuts in health services have increased the financial need for medical services. The Shepherd ministry also provides hygiene items, bedding, and baby needs.

Please help this wonderful Christian ministry with your gifts of dollars and /or such needed items as those listed: **deodorant, baby diapers, baby wipes, baby shampoo, baby powder, baby oil, Q-tips, soap, shampoo, shaving cream and razors, tissues, shampoo and conditioner, toilet paper, women's hygiene products, combs, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, nail clippers, towels, and washcloths.** These hygiene items are collected in the West entryway.

You may use the enclosed S.O.S envelope to mail your contributions to the church office or place them in the offering at any service. Please make checks payable to: "St. Luke Lutheran Church" and in the memo: S.O.S





THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, II

2025 Annual Report will be held immediately following the 10:30am service in the Nave on **Sunday, March 15, 2025**.

This a reminder that the deadline is February 22nd for all Annual Reports. For report submission guidelines, please check your ministry mailbox. Thank you.



RENEW 2026

Join the faithful feast

February 20-21, 2026 at camp Mount Luther

This year's theme is "Join the Faithful Feast" and focuses on the connections between faith and food. We are excited to welcome a number of guest speakers, including Rev. Dr. Lisa Barnes who will lead us in conversation around faith and food. We will cook together, play together, worship together, and experience God together. Come and join the faithful feast!

WHO: Middle school and high school youth

WHAT: a retreat focused on faith and fellowship

WHEN: Friday, February 20, 2026 at 6:30pm to Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 4pm

WHERE: Camp Mount Luther

COST: \$91

WHY: In an age when many of our churches struggle to ministry adequately to youth, we believe youth need safe space to gather with their peers to reflect on their faith. This retreat was created precisely for that purpose.



Pancake Breakfast

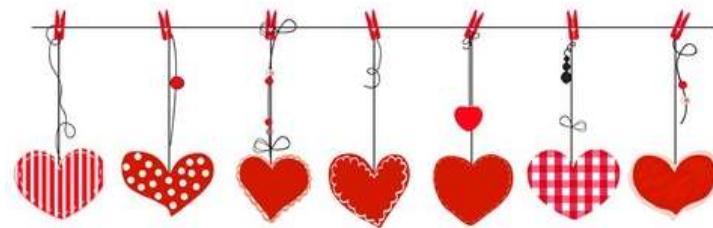
Benefits Pre-School at St Luke

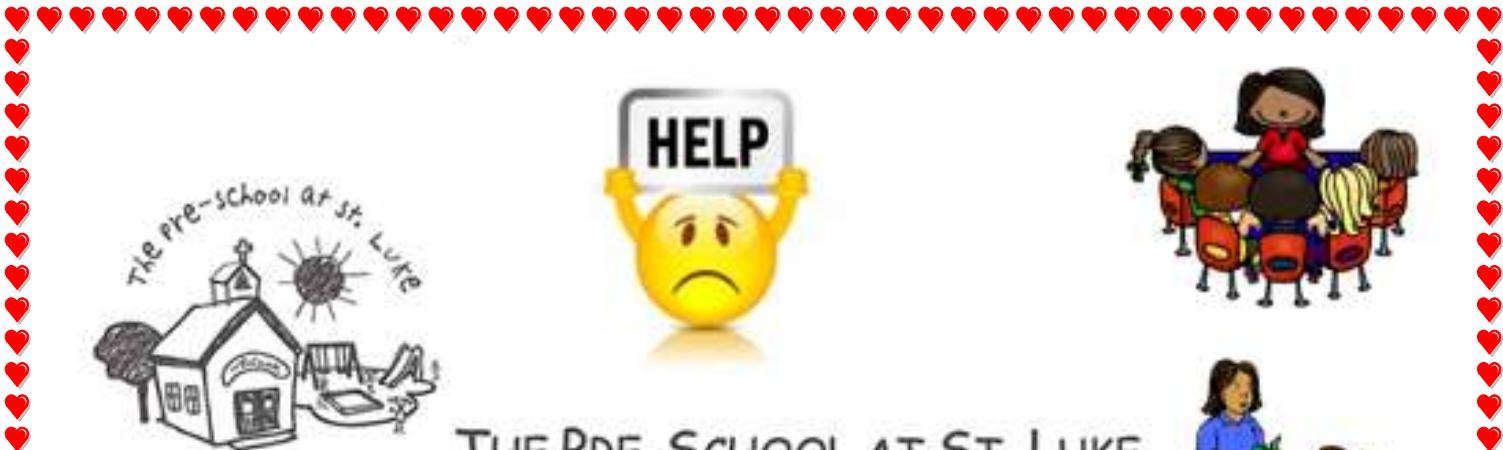
Feb 7, 2026*, 8:00- 11:00 am

\$10 Adults, \$5 children, Under 3 free

Take out is available

Come join us for delicious pancakes, fresh sausage, and scrambled eggs.
Also includes fruit, juices, coffee, tea, apple sauce, and hot cocoa





THE PRE-SCHOOL AT ST. LUKE



Dear St. Luke Congregation,

For the past sixteen years, the James V. Brown Library has generously shared their love of books and reading with our preschoolers through their Storymobile and Books Bus outreach programs. These visits brought excitement, joy, and a world of stories to our little ones.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the library is no longer able to offer this outreach service. Our preschoolers, their families, and teachers, deeply miss the opportunity to explore new books and educational resources together.

In light of this, we are reaching out to you, St. Luke Church, for help in filling this void. The preschoolers and teachers at St. Luke would like to invite congregation members to read a book or two, to our preschoolers on Fridays at 9:15-9:30AM.

Library time is a special moment our preschoolers eagerly look forward to. It's not only a fun and educational experience, but it also could be a beautiful opportunity to build intergenerational connections within the church.

A monthly sign-up sheet will be available on the table in the West Wing. We would be so grateful to have you share a story.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Cindi Stroble or Becky Lewis.

With gratitude,

Cindi Stroble, Director

1400 MARKET STREET, WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701
PHONE: 570-323-2705 FAX: 323-2380

THE PRE-SCHOOL AT ST. LUKE ADMITS STUDENTS OF ANY RACE, COLOR, AND NATIONAL OR ETHNIC ORIGIN.

ORDER YOUR EASTER PLANTS

We are now taking orders for Easter plants. Flowers can be presented in honor of or in memory of friends or loved ones and will be used to decorate the Sanctuary for Easter Sunday. Payment is due with the order of \$10.00 each. Please make checks payable to St. Luke Church with "flowers" on the memo line. **DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 23RD.** Thank you!



Order Form for Easter Plants - Please PRINT Clearly

Name _____

(Print the name of the person from whom the flowers are from EXACTLY as you would like it to appear in the bulletin.)

I would like to purchase Easter flowers:

In Honor of:

In Honor of:

In Memory of:

In Memory of:

TULIPS:

RED PINK PURPLE YELLOW ORANGE

WHITE EASTER LILY

Number of tulips: _____ @ \$10.00 each = _____ Total

Number of lilies: _____ @ \$10.00 each = _____ Total

Please make checks payable to St. Luke with FLOWERS on the memo line.



STRENGTHENING
Families PROGRAM
FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH 10-14

Build **STRONGER** Families
in 7 Evening Sessions!

BONUS!

Help your family learn to manage emotions, set goals, avoid peer pressure, make better decisions, and strengthen relationships. This program is evidence-based, helps reduce behavior problems, and prevents teen substance use.

WHO:
All 10 to 14 year olds and caregivers

WHERE:
Pine Street UMC
Williamsport

Receive **\$150** in Gift Cards for attending at least 6 weeks!

Family Dinner & Childcare Provided for younger siblings

Register today!
Contact Lydia at 570-337-4269
Lplankenhorn@wbdaac.org or Scan:


Deadline: 01/23/2026

WHEN:
Tuesdays
5:30 to 8:00PM
Starting February 3rd, 2026



Nominate Young Musicians for LSM 2026

Standard Enrollment Deadline: March 1

LSMacademy.org/nominate

 LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY & FESTIVAL



LSM 2026 takes place at St. Olaf College from June 21–July 19. Know a young musician (grades 8–12) who would thrive at LSM? Questions? admissions@lutheransummermusic.org.





Registration for Summer 2026 at Camp Mount Luther is open. Why Camp Mount Luther?

- Unplug from screens and enjoy life outdoors
- Learn from trained college-age staff and volunteer chaplains
- Build lasting friendships in small, supportive cabin groups
- Eat well, rest well, and use free time meaningfully

Check out the new summer brochure with programs for preschool through senior high, plus families and adults. Also, day camps in local congregations, bring the camp experience closer to home.

Camp Mount Luther offers a safe, faith-centered environment where kids and families grow, discover their gifts, make new friends, and gather around the campfire. This year's summer program runs from June 14 – August 4.

Applications are now being accepted for **Bold Ideas grants**. As announced at the 2025 Synod Assembly, grants are available to encourage congregations in trying bold ideas for loving their neighbors and putting faith into action in their communities. The Bold Ideas grant review committee will be meeting in February and April to consider applications and award grants. If you have a bold idea for outreach in your community, consider applying! Deadline for consideration at February review is February 6, 2026. Deadline for consideration at April review is April 10, 2026. Email completed application to Sue Ellen Spotts, Director for Evangelical Mission at sueellen.spotts@elca.org

CAMP ♦ REGISTRATION ♦ NOW ♦ OPEN!



CHAD'S WINTERFEST 2026 REFLECTIONS



BY CHAD HERSHBERGER

Once again this January, we took a group from our synod to Winterfest, a large youth event in Lancaster. This was the third year we've done so and we've grown from just three people to nine this year!

I love energy in the hotel's auditorium with a few hundred youth and their advisors. The worship experiences are meaningful, the accommodations were fantastic, the food was good, and the fellowship was top-notch.

This year's theme was "Better Together." We were reminded over and over again that as a community of believers, we are better together.

We lived this out as we did a food packing project on Saturday afternoon. The 260 people packed about 30,000 meals for those who endure food insecurity. We were able to pack those meals in under an hour!

Family time is also one of my favorite times during the event. We gathered as our "home" group of those from the synod. We debriefed on the day and shared our reflections on what we were learning and observing. It was endearing to me to see the growth that our youth and adults experienced during the weekend.

If you are in high school or are a young adult, consider coming with our synod group this year. We'd like to get a small contingent to be part of Winterfest. If you are interested in attending, please contact us at cml@campmountluther.org. Registration closes in early December.

And please reach out if you have any questions. I'd be happy to tell you more stories about my time at Winterfest.



CAMEL TRACKS

News from Camp Mount Luther

February 1 — Dinner Church ([CaTALYST at Camp Mount Luther](#))

February 10 — Faith and Fellowship ([CaTALYST on Discord](#))

February 15 — Camp Mount Luther Sunday

February 20-21 — RENEW youth retreat

February 21 — Service Project ([CaTALYST at Camp Mount Luther](#))

February 24 — Game Night ([CaTALYST on Discord](#))

March 1 — Dinner Church ([CaTALYST at Camp Mount Luther](#))

March 8 — Open Mic and Talent Show (sponsored by USS Youth)

March 11-12 — [Raise the Region](#)



February 5, 2026

- ***Bishop's Day**

February 5, 2026 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

February 11, 2026

- **Pericope Study**

February 11, 2026 8:30 am - 3:00 pm

United Lutheran Seminary's Dr. Allison DeForest will lead **Quarterly Pericope Studies** on November 12, February 11, and May 27 at The Lutheran Home in Hollidaysburg, from 8:30- 3:00. Cost is \$20.00 (payment may be made through [registration link](#) or brought to the event). Seating is limited.

February 15, 2026

- **Camp Mount Luther Sunday**

February 15, 2026

Congregations in the Upper Susquehanna Synod (ELCA) will celebrate outdoor ministry on **Camp Mount Luther Sunday, February 15, 2026 (Transfiguration Sunday)**. The Synod Council designated this day to highlight the camp during worship. Camp Mount Luther is an extension of congregational ministry. Churches are encouraged to promote the camp on February 15—or another Sunday this spring—through bulletin inserts, temple talks, camper testimonials, displays, special music, or a special offering during worship services. Get more information here: <https://www.campmountluther.org/cml-Sunday/>

February 20, 2026

- ***Renew**

February 20, 2026 - February 21, 2026

February 28, 2026

- **Synod Council Meeting**

February 28, 2026 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

St. John's, PottsGrove

Join us for a time of fellowship, food, and faith as part of Mount Luther's new faith community. Questions? Contact Jim at jim@campmountluther.org





To our members celebrating a birthday in February 2026....

Chip Edmonds	February 02
Donna Martin	February 03
Peggy Yohn	February 06
Bonita Cockley	February 07
Patricia Durand	February 08
Allan Husband	February 09
Lynn Shade	February 09
Erick Fortin	February 12
Dylan Rhodes	February 13
Sam Blair	February 24
Mia Clark	February 26
Laura McNassor	February 26
Kathy Borch	February 28



To our members celebrating a Anniversary inFebruary 2026

Phil and Susan Harvey February 26

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: pastor@stlukeluth.comcastbiz.net



Karen Spencer, Office Coordinator
Email: info@stlukeweb.com



Rebecca Ciabattari, Music Director
Email: beckyciab@gmail.com



Chris Knaur, Sexton
Email: info@stlukeweb.com



Melissa Eshleman, Business Manager
Email: businessmanager.stlukeluth@gmail.com

REMINDERS: Office hours – M - F 9:00AM-1:00PM

Bulletin **deadline** – WEDNESDAY 9:00AM

Spectrum **deadline** – 15th of each month

Council Pack **deadline** – FRIDAY 9:00AM before Mtg

Office E-mail – info@stlukeweb.com

Office Phone – 570-323-7309

tinyurl.com/StLW

