



The Herald

February 2026

Newsletter for the Congregation
And Friends of
ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

101 N. Greenwood Street, Tamaqua, PA 18252

(570) 668-2180 ~ FAX (570)668-2181

Pastor ~ Cindy White

Melody Gensure ~ Parish Administrator - Email~ zionlcof@verizon.net
Parish website ~ www.ziontamaqua.com

Our Mission: Empowered and inspired by God to bring others to Christ.

LET IT SNOW LET IT SNOW LET IT SNOW

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

January has proven to be a very cold and snowy month. Only God knows what February will look like. That being said, the season of Lent is right around the corner. Ash Wednesday is February 18th. Let's not let the weather affect attending Lenten services. You may stream from your home or come in person. The topic this year is "Lent in Plain Sight" A devotion through ten objects. By Jill J. Duffield. Bread is just one of the objects we will discuss. Our 40 days will be filled with a very interesting journey of understanding and appreciation for all of the incredible gifts God has and continues to give us. We may each select our own prayerful Lenten disciplines; however, we can experience this time together in this meaningful sermon series. The Lenten schedule is posted in this Herald edition. We alternate services with Saint John's and look forward to this tradition every year.

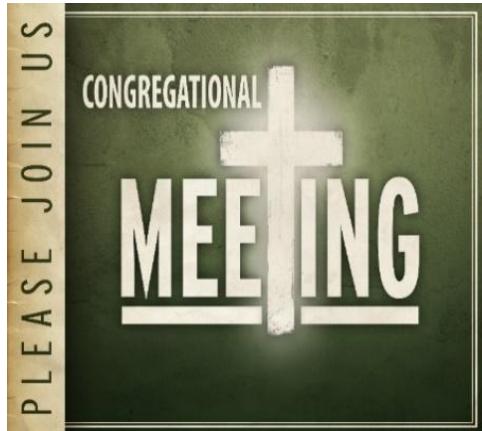
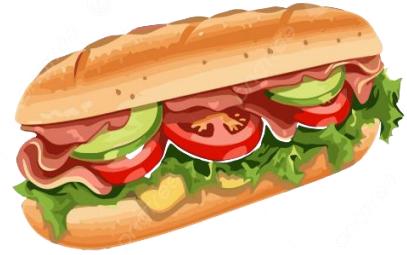
There is a great deal of Havoc going on in our world. I want to remind all of us that God remains steadfast and true. ***"Let not your hearts be troubled"*** John 14:1 Please follow along with our Lenten series this year. It will help us all to focus on our Triune God. It will provide us with spiritual sustenance during these cold and uncertain days of winter.

I pray we are all kept well, safe and warm. Happy Valentine's Day

With love, Pastor Cindy

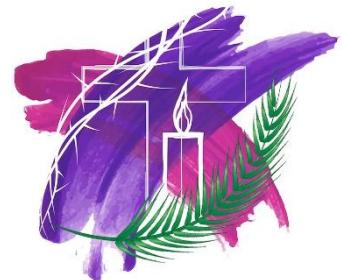
Morning Prayer on Facebook and Website: Rev. Cindy White reads a selected Bible verse and offers a brief message or song Wednesdays at 9 a.m. Individuals with specific prayer requests can email those requests to Pastor White at zionlutheranrev@gmail.com.

Culinary Hoagie Sale Saturday, February 7th - deadline to order is February 1st - Regular Hoagies are \$8 each. Pick up is from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm and 5:30 – 6:45 pm. Order at <https://www.ziontamaqua.com> or by calling 570-668-4451. Thank you for your support!!



OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING will be held Sunday, February 8, 2026, following the 9:00 am Service. Our agenda will consist of the approval of the 2025 Annual reports for all committees and organizations. As always, we encourage all members to attend this meeting as a quorum needs to be met. Copies of the Annual report are available in the Gathering room.

The Lenten season begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18, 2026. A worship service will be held at Zion beginning at **6:00 pm** with Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes. **Please note the time change.**



2025 financial statements have been mailed. The IRS requires us to only send statements to those who contributed \$75 and above. Please be advised that we will be following the IRS requirement and will send statements only to those who have contributed \$75 and above. If you did not meet the IRS requirement but would still wish to receive a statement, please contact the church office as soon as possible at 570-668-2180 or zionlcof@verizon.net and a statement will be sent to you.

HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?

PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE WITH YOUR NEW ADDRESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. When mail is returned to the church office due to an address change, the church must pay .92 cents per piece of mail returned. You can help us to eliminate this charge if you notify us when your address changes.

...Thank you for your cooperation!



THANK YOU

Thank You to Deb Davies and Carol Dietrich for addressing the Christmas Cards that were mailed to Zion member households!

This year Daylight Savings Time will begin on Sunday, March 8th. Don't forget to set your clocks one hour ahead before you go to bed on March 7th.



Upcoming Events

February 7 – Hoagie Sale

February 8 – Annual Congregational Meeting

February 8 – Commissioning for Minister Michael Haspe

February 18 – Ash Wednesday Service

February 27 - March 13 & 27 – Lenten Fish Dinners

March 6 – Blessings Thrift Store



Inclement Weather Policy

If we get inclement weather preceding a worship service, members of our congregation will be able to get information by doing the following:

- Check out our website at www.ziontamaqua.com and our Facebook page
- Listen to WLSH AM 1410 and WMGH FM 105.5



Zion's Blessings Thrift Shop sale is on Friday, March 6th from 9 am to 5 pm. The sale features gently used clothing for all ages, toys, books, and general household items. Come take a look! Limited Take-Out Menu. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE DONATIONS OUTSIDE BY THE HANDICAP ENTRANCE.** Thank you all for your continued support!

Altar Flower and Bulletin Sponsors needed for 2026
- The Altar Flower and Bulletin Sponsor list for 2026 is on the bulletin board. The costs of the flowers are \$42.60 and individuals will be billed from the florist. The cost of the bulletin sponsorship is \$16.00 and monies are due when you place your name on the list. You can also sponsor the Candles for the month at \$40. Please remember to fill out a card with your honorarium or memorial, this information is needed for the bulletin. Please do not sign up without filling out a form. These sponsorships are on a first come first serve basis; this is to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to sponsor these memorials. Please contact the church office if you have questions. Thank you in advance for your sponsorship!



ALTAR FLOWER POLICY approved by Church Council: November 9, 2010 - We shall only place flowers on the altar when someone is sponsoring. If there are no sponsors, there will be no flowers placed on the altar. Zion ELC will not pay for flowers that are not sponsored.



ZIONTAMAQUA

Zion is on Instagram. Go to the website or Facebook for complete instructions or scan the QR code.

A reminder that both a record of communion AND a record of contribution is necessary to maintain voting active member status. Please remember to complete a communion card and to use your offering envelopes. Thank you, Church Council



ATTENTION GRADUATING CONFIRMED ZION MEMBERS: CLASS OF 2026

Before you know it graduation will be here! Please submit a photo with information on high school graduating from, where you will be attending school or what your future plans may be, major, parents' names and how you were involved with Zion. You may submit a photo now with more information to follow later to the church office. Thank you.



Attention parents: The ELCA Youth Gathering will take place in **Minneapolis, MN, June 28-July 2, 2027!** The Gathering is open to all students who are entering grades 9-12 at the time of the Gathering. If your student is interested in attending, please text Brian Lawfer at (570)952-5966. We need to know how many are interested in attending, so we can begin to plan. We do not need a firm commitment yet, just an idea of who may be interested.



We extend our Christian Love and Sympathy to the family and friends of:

Jan McRoberts, who passed away on January 2, 2026

We ask God to comfort the family at this time.

Please keep them in your prayers.

Zion Lenten Fish Dinner

February 27

March 13 and 27

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM or sell-out

Adult \$14.00 – Children up to age 10 \$7.00

Take-Outs Available

Menu includes Baked Haddock, Crab Cakes or Chicken Fingers, Mac & Cheese, Stewed

Tomatoes, Cole Slaw and Dessert. Combinations and ala carte are not available.

Dinners may be pre-ordered on the website (www.ziontamaqua.com) or by calling 570-668-4451. Deadline to order dinners is **February 22, March 8 & 22.**

Walk-ins welcome. Hope to see you there!



Looking for a way you can help serve your church, but don't have a lot of extra time? Are you able to commit to a half hour, on a day you will already be here? We are looking for greeters to welcome people to the church on Sunday mornings, hand out bulletins, and answer questions from visitors. We would like to have enough people to make up at least 6 teams, with 2 people per team. Please text or call Brian Lawfer at 570-952-5966 for more information.



Church Greeter Ministry



In talking with the people John says in Luke 3:11 "*“Whoever has two tunics should share with him who has none, and whoever has food should do the same.”*" This is a reminder that the People Pantry is being used heavily and in need of donations. While grocery shopping pick up an extra item to share with our less fortunate community neighbors. "*“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”* 2 Corinthians 9:7

DID YOU KNOW ...Zion is now a Tamaqua Narcan distribution site? You may be wondering what is Narcan? Narcan is a life-saving medication used to reverse the effects of accidental opioid overdoses.

This medication is good to have on hand because:

1. You could end up saving a friend or neighbor in need. You never know when you'll encounter someone in need of this life-saving medication. Keep it in your purse or your car for when you might need it.
2. Parents with teenagers are encouraged to keep naloxone in their homes.
3. Senior citizens can mistakenly overdose on medications. Having more of this life-saving drug in the community is important.



Narcan kits are available free of charge. Feel free to grab one off the table. Our Parish Administrator will pass on Narcan requests to Michele Valentine who is heading this ministry.

Zion's 2026 Church Council officers: Brian Lawfer, President, Amanda Hascin, Vice President, Shelly Woodring, Secretary, Dave Gensure, Treasurer, and Ann Marie Hadesty, Financial Secretary. Other members of Council include Sheri Beltz, Brian Constenbader, Arlene Derr, Laura Fulmer, Thomas Graham (Youth Advocate), George Taylor, Michelle Valentine, and Brittany Voelpel; if you have suggestions or concerns, please seek out a member of Council so that we can promptly address the needs of the congregation.

Please note if you have recently become a member or feel there are changes in your membership information please fill out a membership packet located in the Gathering Room. If you need them sent to you, please contact the church office. Thank you for keeping our records up to date.

Would you like to make a gift to our Capital Campaign today? Do you need an envelope for your gift? Blank envelopes can be found in the rear of the church on either side. Please just write your name and Capital Campaign on the envelope so we can give you credit; and place the envelope in the boxes found on the wall on either side at the back on the sanctuary. For information on our Capital Campaign, please visit our website at <http://www.ziontamaqua.com/capital-campaign/>



Gebert Society - If you know of someone who has remembered Zion in their will/estate with a gift (past and present), please contact the office with that information which will be used in the annual report. Names can be added to the Gebert Society at any time. Thank you.

Please Join Us!
Saturday Worship - 6:00 pm
Sunday
Worship - 9:00 am
Christian Education - 10:15 am
Confirmation - 11:00 am

DEADLINE: All information for the **March/ April 2026 issue of the “Herald”** is due at the church office no later than **Monday, February 16, 2026**. Please note this is a combined issue. You may e-mail your information to zionlcof@verizon.net or stop in during regular office hours. Thank you for your co-operation!

Hospitalizations - If you or someone you know is hospitalized, please call the church office at 668-2180. Due to HIPAA Law names are no longer published in the newspaper and we are not contacted by the hospital unless the patient requests it, when admitted, let them know you are a member of Zion Lutheran church. Zion Lutheran Church Lehigh Valley System Hospital Code is 356; If you are admitted to a hospital in the Lehigh Valley Hospital system (not St. Luke's/ Miner's) and you want our church and Pastor to be notified, provide Zion's Code # 356 when you provide admission information.



NEPA SYNOD
NORTHERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

leaders and members, and anyone interested in keeping up to date with happenings across the Synod and around the ELCA. nepasynod.org/e-news/

Synod E-News -
E-News is a weekly e-newsletter for rostered leaders (pastors and deacons), congregational

Office Hours
Monday & Wednesday
12:00 – 5:00 pm
Tuesday & Thursday
8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Please use door located on
Mauch
Chunk Street, ring bell



1 John 4:19
We love because he first loved us.





Please continue to use your Boyer's key tag every time you shop in any Boyer's Markets. If you do not have a Boyer's tag, they are located in the Gathering room. Please use the swipe card, the receipt does not need to be turned in. Thank you for your participation in this program. Keep using those cards!

When submitting Redner's receipts:

1. You must have a Redner's card & swipe the Redner's card upon checkout so the save a tape amount is on the receipt.
2. Please do not cut the information with the save a tape code off the receipt.
3. Please hand in the receipt to our container in the gathering room or mail them to the church office.

If you have any questions, please see Beth Marcavage. Thank you and keep saving!

Sharing your story - As part of an ongoing emphasis on Zion's impact, we'd like to share ways in which Zion has made a difference in the lives of its members and its community. Please respond to any **ONE** of these questions and include **your name** at the end. Send your response to zionlcof@verizon.net (subject line "Impact story" or Zion Lutheran, 101 North Greenwood St., Tamaqua, PA 18252 Attention: Impact

1. How has Zion made a difference in your life? OR
2. What impact has Zion had on your life the last 2 1/2 years? OR
3. What is your vision for the future of Zion's ministry? OR
4. How has serving in a Zion ministry made a difference in your life?



Do you like to clean? Some people really like to clean--honest! If you do, why not join the Cleaning Angel team? We are looking for about 2 or 3 more members to add to the team. Cleaning Angels are members of the congregation who each week clean the Sanctuary, Gathering Room and Library. When two people do that cleaning, it can take 2-3 hours. Being a Cleaning Angel is not intended to be a lifelong commitment and so we thank those who have served and "retired." That means there are openings in the cleaning schedule for other members of the congregation to step up and help keep the church clean. This is a great opportunity to serve your church. The hours are flexible and there's lots of great fellowship involved. Please contact any member of the Property Committee or Cleaning Sexton Kim Eckert or Parish Administrator Melody Gensure.

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES 2026

St. John's and Zion will once again hold combined Mid-Week Lenten Services at 7:00 pm. The service will follow the Holden Evening prayer from the ELW.

You don't want to miss it. Lent is such a sacred time in the church year. Let's walk these weeks together in faith.

February 25 - Zion
March 4 - St. John's
March 11 - Zion
March 18 - St. John's
March 25 - Zion
April 1 - St. John's

If Tamaqua school district has early dismissal or cancels school, the mid-week Lenten service - is cancelled.



Easter Gifts

Easter is generally a time when gifts and memorials are presented. While we would welcome and appreciate a special gift to any of our funds most Easter gifts usually arrive as Endowment Fund, Capital Campaign Fund or Easter lilies. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Church office. **This Form must accompany your contributions so that the office knows if your memorial is to be placed in the Easter Sunday handout.**

Easter lily/ Endowment Fund/ Capital Campaign (Circle one)

In Memory of _____

By: _____

Number of Lilies: _____ Amount: _____



Cost is \$13.00 per Lily. Endowment Gifts and other gifts can be any amount. Please return this form to the office no later than Monday, March 16, 2026. This is a firm deadline please have your orders in by the due date so that the lily order can be placed.

December/ January Memorials

GIFTS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

THE ALTAR CANDLES are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of Rose Miller Smith, Robert "Pap" & Madeline "Gram" Trakes by Mike & Kathy Miller & family

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of Gordy and Margaret Emma and their daughter, Margaret Elizabeth Clark by the family

In loving memory of McKayla Ann Wall by Lauren, Jesse, Nicholas & Kallia Wall

In loving memory of Ida Piccin by a friend

In honor of my brother Jim and family by Pastor Cindy

In loving memory of the January 4th birthday of John Carl Casler Jr. by his mom, sisters, Ashly, Alesia, & Alyssa, nieces, Aubry, Adalynn, Ava, Amelia & Alaina & nephews, Bradlee & Camdyn

In loving memory of granddaughter, Kendall McLaughlin by grandparents, Barry and Marlene McLaughlin and uncles, Chris and Eddie

In loving memory of my parents by Shelly Woodring

In loving memory of my cousin, Robert A. Coccio Jr. on his heavenly birthday on January 26th by Madeline Coccio and family

THE BULLETINS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of my parents, Carl & Mary Koch by John & Carol Dietrich & Jeff & Johnny

For the prosperity of our church in our hometown and community by Stacei Faust and Emily Stahler

In honor of the birth of Jesus and in loving memory of loved ones by Bob & Terri Livingston

For the prosperity of our church in our hometown and community by Stacei Faust and Emily Stahler

In honor of the birthday of my grandson, Nikolas Smith by Denise I. Smolar

In loving memory of her father, Russel Mengel on his birthday on January 24th by Rochelle and Joe Evanousky

CURRENT FUND DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of my husband, Gary, my parents & all family loved ones by Beth Marcavage

In loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Francis Epler at Christmas by daughter, Joan Deitrich

In loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Francis Epler at Christmas by daughter, Joan Deitrich

In loving memory of our parents, Louis & Ruth Markel and Francis (Murph) Arner by Fran and Joyce Arner

In loving memory of his sister, Diane Miller by Fran and Joyce Arner

In loving memory of their niece, McKayla Wall by Fran and Joyce Arner

In loving memory of Jan McRoberts. May God grant unto her eternal rest. by Sharon Haldeman

Special Thank you to Mark Valentine, Bob Fisher, Charlie Long & Mike Miller for taking copper roofing material removed from bell tower and other items scrapped

In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by John & Carol Dietrich

In loving memory of my mother, Ella Gerber by daughter, Marlene McLaughlin and family

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUND DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Bob & Gail Jones

ORGAN FUND DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Martha Zellner

ENDOWMENT FUND DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and
In loving memory of family & friends by John & Carol Dietrich & family
In loving memory of our parents by Rochelle & Joseph Evanousky
In honor of Culinary Crew by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Fritzinger
In loving memory of family & friends by John & Carol Dietrich & family
In loving memory of our parents by Rochelle & Joseph Evanousky
In honor of Culinary Crew by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Fritzinger
In loving memory of Larry, Roger & Mary by Judy
In loving memory of loved ones by John & Carl Dietrich & family
In loving memory of my husband John and our parents and grandparents at Christmas by Sharon
Haldeman
In loving memory of family & friends by Lori & Bill Krell
In loving memory of Paul Pecha Jr by Irene & family
In loving memory of McKayla Wall by Lauren & Jesse Wall
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Sandy & Joe Mehalko
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Marilyn Leipold
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Lori & Andy Ryan
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by David & Louise Schock
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Mark & Charlene Valentine
In loving memory and in celebration of the life of Janet McRoberts by Laura & Brad Hance
In loving memory of Jan Mullin McRoberts by Thomas & Jacquelyn Rees
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Ann & Jack Yaroma
In loving memory of Jan McRoberts by Kim Jacobs

DIAPER DEPOT DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and

In name of Joanne Tuckett
In name of Kay & Michael Truchan
Given in honor of Pastor Cindy White by Richard & Judith Ketz

PEOPLE'S PANTRY DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and
Donation from Mauch Chunk Trust Company

February Candle, Altar Flower & Bulletin sponsors are needed.

Please sign up on the church bulletin board.

Instead of giving up smoking, sweets, or something like that during Lent, why not give something else up, the most valuable thing you have--YOUR TIME! Volunteer to do something for your Church, your neighbor, your community. You might find that giving yourself brings back rewards that you just never imagined. And then, keep on doing it long after Lent, make it a lifestyle.

Christmas Memorials 2025

The Altar Candles are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of Rose Miller Smith, Robert "Pap" & Madeline "Gram" Trakes by Mike & Kathy Miller & family

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of Ida Piccin by a friend.

The Bulletins are given to the Glory of God and

In honor of the birth of Jesus & in loving memory of loved ones by Bob & Terri Livingston

Organ Fund Donations are given to the Glory of God and

For the repair of the organ pipes and the Christmas organ tuning by Bob and Gail Jones

The Poinsettia Plants are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of loved ones by Paul Wolfe

In loving memory of Richard Dreisbach by the Livingston Family

In loving memory of my husband, Karl C. Miller on Christmas Day by wife, Katherine I. Miller

In loving memory of my grandparents, Eugene and Jane Springer by Sonia Brode

In loving memory of my grandparents, Robert and Anna Brode by Sonia Brode

In loving memory of my dad, Roger Brode and Mary Brode by Sonia Brode

In honor of my mom, Judy Brennan by Sonia Brode

In loving memory of Larry Brennan by Sonia Brode

In joyful celebration of Sammuel Scott Sneddon on his first Christmas love, Aunt Judy and Sonia

In loving memory of loved ones by Mark and Charlene Valentine

In loving memory of loved ones, Evan and Anna Thomas, Sierra Thomas, & Donna Thomas by Pamela Marrs

In loving memory of Ben & Emily Turrano & Robert & Gertrude Fritzinger by Glenn & Lorie Fritzinger

In loving memory of Edward Haldeman by Cathy Haldeman

In loving memory of McKayla Ann Wall by Lauren, Jesse, Nicholas & Kallia Wall

In loving memory of our parents, John & Fern Woodring by Ray, Bob, Shelly, & Jim

In loving memory of our sister, Linda Yellets by Ray, Bob, Shelly, & Jim

In loving memory of our brother, Jack Woodring by Ray, Bob, Shelly, & Jim

In loving memory of our nephew, Bill Woodring by Ray, Bob, Shelly, & Jim

In loving memory of John Leipold by Marilyn & children

In loving memory of granddaughter, Kendall McLaughlin by grandparents, Barry and Marlene McLaughlin and uncles, Chris and Eddie

In loving memory of parents, Clair and Ella Gerber by daughter, Marlene McLaughlin and family

In loving memory of Hubert Becker by Bonnie and family

In loving memory of loved ones by Frank & Kris Rudy & family

In loving memory of a dear husband, dad, and grandfather, Richard Skasko by Darlene Skasko, Cheryl Skasko-Shemansik and Cole and Duke Shemansik

In loving memory of family & friends by Marlene & Roy Turner

In loving memory of Paul Pecha Jr. by Irene & family

In loving memory of loved ones by Donna & Morgan Thomas & family

In loving memory of Hubert Becker by Bonnie & Family

Christmas Memorial Gifts to the Capital Campaign Fund are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of Ben & Emily Turrano & Robert & Gertrude Fritzinger by Glenn & Lorie Fritzinger
In loving memory of parents, Oliver & Jane Steigerwalt & Arthur & Ruth (Brown) Jones by Bob & Gail Jones

Christmas Memorial Gifts to the Candle Fund are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of Carl and Mary Koch by Kelly, Jason and Joel Smith
In loving memory of John Lattanzi by Beth & Olivia Lattanzi
In loving memory of my parents, Jack & Betty Davies by Beth Lattanzi
In loving memory of my brother, Jeff Davies by Beth Lattanzi

Christmas Memorial Gifts to the Helping Hand Fund are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of Charles "Chunky" and Pauline Schissler by Barry and Marlene McLaughlin and sons

Christmas Memorial Gifts to the Current Fund are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of family and friends by Joe & Sandy Mehalko
In loving memory of our son, Brian & her parents, Arlington & Yustina Hawk by Dave & Darlene Fetterman
In loving memory of my husband, Karl C. Miller on Christmas Day by wife Katherine I. Miller
In loving memory of my brother-in-law, Karl C Miller on Christmas Day by sister-in-law Charlotte Scheidly
In loving memory of our granddaughter, McKayla Ann Wall by Dave & Louise Schock
In loving memory of brother, Carl Gerber by sister, Marlene McLaughlin and family
In loving memory of John Carl Casler Jr. by mom and sisters, Ashly, Alesia, and Alyssa
In loving memory of Brian Fetterman, love Ashly, Aubry, and Camdyn
In loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. E. A. Follweiler from their children and their families
In loving memory of Michael Cappos by his children and their families
In loving memory of Jay Follweiler by his brother and sisters
In loving memory of Renee Follweiler Stultz from her brother and sisters
In loving memory of parents, John and Mae Barton by Beverly Knoebel

Christmas Memorial Gifts to the Fuel Fund are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of John Leipold by Marilyn & children

Christmas Memorial Gifts to the Endowment Fund are given to the Glory of God:

In loving memory of all our friends & family by Dave & Darlene Fetterman
In loving memory of Martha and Dan Zeigler by daughter, Gerry
In loving memory of Grammy Becker by Karen Cunningham
In loving memory of his parents, Marvin & Agnes Ristila & her father, Stanley Karnish by Mr. & Mrs. Steven Ristila
In loving memory of his parents, James and Kathleen Valentine by Mark & Charlene Valentine
In loving memory of her parents, Joseph and Mary Dakes by Mark and Charlene Valentine
In loving memory of our parents by Rochelle and Joe Evanousky
In loving memory of her parents, Dorothy & Jasper Collura, by Ann Marie & David Hadesty & family
In loving memory of his mother, Gayle & Dave Hadesty, by Ann Marie & David Hadesty & family
In loving memory of her parents, Carl and Mary Koch by John & Carol Dietrich & family
In loving memory of her brother, Carl W. Koch Jr by John & Carol Dietrich & family

Zion Members, you are invited to celebrate
the Commissioning of LLM Michael Haspe

Sunday, February 8 at 2:00 PM

Christ Lutheran Church — 10 E Mahanoy St Mahanoy City, PA 17948

If you plan to stay for food and refreshments following the service,
please RSVP by this Friday (1/30) to help the congregation plan:

christlutheranllm@gmail.com



LLM Michael Haspe

Sunday, Feb 8, 2026

2:00pm

**Commissioning as Licensed Lay Minister of
Christ Lutheran Church, Mahanoy City**

10 E Mahanoy St Mahanoy City, PA 17948



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Learning to Stay in the Conversation

Written by: *The Rev. Samantha Drennan, Co-Convenor, Synod Racial Justice Team*

I have been doing racial justice work with my colleagues in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod since late 2020. I have long known about widespread racial injustice in the United States, and the fact that systemic racism is deeply rooted in our long-established institutions, including the church. However, like many white people, for a long time I tended to avoid frank conversations about the injustice faced by people of color in the US. It was – and still is – a topic that makes people uncomfortable. And I felt helpless to change anything.

A shift came for me upon seeing the events of what is sometimes called “The Summer of George Floyd.” Thanks to outspoken leaders like The Rev. William Barber, the late civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis, and the local group POWER Interfaith, I became aware how widespread these injustices are. I came to realize that these incidents, including but

not limited to racial profiling by law enforcement, would never be addressed until white people began talking about them. As a result, in late 2020 I joined a group of Synod laypeople and clergy who had come to the same realization and wanted to do something. After many conversations, we began to plan an event where those who felt called would start having these difficult conversations.



On May 22, 2021, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod hosted a virtual conference called “Trouble the Water,” a day comprising worship, a keynote speaker, and workshops. The participants were invited to join together in that “troubled water” – to come willing to experience the discomfort caused by openly confronting racism, then hopefully joining us in generating the waves of change and progress we hoped to make. Following worship, the Reverend CeCee Mills (then Director of Evangelical Mission of the North Carolina Synod) delivered a powerful keynote address, after which two sets of concurrent workshops were offered on a range of topics. It was a first attempt at providing space for honest, difficult conversations.

Following this event, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Racial Justice Team was formed. In the past four years, the team has submitted two resolutions (which both passed at their respective Synod Assemblies): one requiring anti-racism training for rostered ministers in the Synod; and another adopting a Land Acknowledgement statement. The team has also facilitated an online book study and has held six in-person anti-racism training sessions.



Williams, who represented an organization called "A Long Talk about the Uncomfortable Truth" - "A Long Talk" for short. His official job title is "Chief Empowerment Officer." He began by telling us a deeply moving story of how this 21-day anti-racism activation experience came to be.

Kyle then shared their mission: to energize and empower allies in the pursuit of this shared purpose; and their process - to engage in an ongoing conversation focused on truth, understanding, and problem solving. He explained that many people will say they are not racist, and that's fine. However, for many people being not racist or non-racist is not enough. What some people need is a way to become actively anti-racist.

Since I have begun doing this work, time and time again people have said to me "look, I know racism and white supremacy are wrong, I get it. But when someone says something like that around me, I get nervous/frustrated/angry and I don't know what to say." I understand this frustration; I too have found myself angry and at a loss for words. What was so impactful about Kyle's presentation was that I now finally have a workable and direct response.

Kyle led us through a process called CPR, which stands for Clarify, Probe, Redirect. He said our goal should be to "get curious, not furious"; to engage the speaker's critical thinking ability by asking questions following a racist statement. Briefly, it looks like this:

Clarify:	(example) "What do you mean when you say ___?"
Probe:	(example) "How do you think it makes ___ feel when you say that?"
Redirect:	(example) "What would happen if you supported ___?"

"A Long Talk" gathers an online cohort to explore this process. Participants first watch a video on the history of race in America, then take part in a two-hour Zoom session discussing connections between American history and current realities. A follow-up session, held either in person or on Zoom, focuses on using the CPR protocol to challenge racist comments and beliefs. Ongoing support encourages continued growth and engagement in anti-racism efforts. More details about the upcoming "A Long Talk" coming soon at godslove.org/racial-justice-team.



"A Long Talk" cohort (Zoom sessions)
Saturday February 28 at 10:00am (1 of 2)
Saturday March 7 at 1:00pm (2 of 2)

REGISTRATION COMING SOON

alongtalk.com

A LONG TALK
 ABOUT THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

 This event is organized by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Racial Justice Team

Last Fall (October 30 - November 1, 2025) I had the privilege of attending the first ever Synod Racial Justice Leader Gathering at the ELCA in Chicago. This gathering brought together approximately 50 individuals, both clergy and laypeople, who organize racial justice work in their respective Synods. Planned and overseen by Jennifer De Leon (ELCA director for Racial Justice) and Rev. Christina M. Montgomery, ELCA Racial Justice Manager, it was a deeply impactful and inspirational experience for me. The schedule included devotions, reflections, workshops, and small group time with other leaders from our regions.

The most impactful presentation was done by Kyle

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This Newsletter was prepared
Especially for:

