



MAILING ADDRESS:

Bern Evangelical Lutheran Church
820 West Leesport Road
Leesport, PA 19533
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Email: bernlutheranchurch@gmail.com
Website: www.bernchurch.org
Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Bern-Lutheran-Church-103625754955228>

WORSHIP:

In-Sanctuary Worship on Sundays at **10:00 a.m.**

MINISTERS:

ALL THE MEMBERS EVERYDAY

PARISH SECRETARY:

Korinne Hotzman, (610) 790-7195 (cell)
Office Hours: Tuesday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Jane Battaglieri, Phone: 610-370-0965

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Michael Braucher, President
Richard Gruber, Vice President
Theresa Shurr, Secretary
Pat Yocum, Financial Secretary
David Hartman, Treasurer
Jane Battaglieri
Christopher Becker
Matthew Kasisky
Linda Lash
Dianne Leininger
Erin Readinger

BUILDING PRINCIPLES:

- Devotion to Jesus as Lord and Savior
- Compassionate Sharing and Community Service
- Persistent Faithfulness
- Courageous Witness
- Flexible Leadership

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

God's purpose for our congregation is to:

Learn God's mission

Share God's love

Witness through Word and Service

Welcome all to a fellowship of forgiveness and thankful praise

BERN BUGLE NEWSLETTER SPONSOR

The *Bern Bugle* for February is given to the Glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following discussions took place and decisions made at our council meeting on Monday, January 16:

- The election of council officers took place before the scheduled Council Meeting.
- The total amount of \$2,372.16 that was donated from our Outreach Committee was used to cover the giving for Benevolence for the year, including the gifts for our shut-in members.
- A discussion took place about holding a clothing drive during Lent to benefit the Hope Rescue Mission.

OUR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING will be on **Monday, February 20 at 7:00 p.m.**

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles for the March *Bern Bugle* are due by **Tuesday, February 21.**

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2023 offering envelopes have finally arrived from the company. You may pick up your envelopes on the tables in the hallway on Sunday when you come for worship or you can stop in during office hours. Those envelopes not picked up will be mailed. A blank offering envelope has been included with this newsletter to hold you over until you get to pick up your envelope at church. Thank you!

END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

You have hopefully received your end-of-year contribution statements by now. Notify Korinne in the office if you have not received one and she can mail you another one. Please review them carefully and notify Korinne in the office of any discrepancies. Thank you!

FOOD PANTRY “SOUPeR” BOWL!

The Confirmation class will be collecting donations for the Food Pantry. On **Sunday, February 5, and Sunday, February 12**, you can donate money or canned soup. Monetary donations can be placed in the large soup pots located in the narthex. The pots will have images of the two teams and you may place your donation in the pot showing the team you think will win. Members of our class will be in the narthex to collect your canned soup donations as well.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On **Sunday, February 19**, we will be holding our Congregational Meeting after our worship service. We hope you will be able to join us for worship and then stay after for our meeting. A quorum of 25 voting members is needed to conduct the business of the church. Copies of the Annual Report will be available on the round table in the narthex shortly.

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY FOOD PANTRY REPRESENTATIVE NEEDED

Bern Lutheran Church participates in the Schuylkill Valley Food Pantry distribution two times a year. We are looking for someone who can represent Bern at the committee meetings. If you would be interested, please let Korinne in the church office know either by phone or email. Thank you for your consideration.

ALTAR FLOWER, BULLETIN, AND NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIPS

In order to provide high quality weekly bulletins and cover mailing costs, we invite you to become an Altar Flower sponsor for \$35.00/week or a Bulletin sponsor for only \$20.00/week. You can also sponsor our monthly Newsletter for \$40.00/month. You are welcome to sponsor any of these items in honor of important birthdays/anniversaries, in honor of or in memory of someone, or to the Glory of God. Sign-up sheets for 2023 are now available on the bulletin board in the hallway.

FEBRUARY SIGN-UP SHEETS

We are in need of Altar Flower and Bulletin sponsors for February 5, 12, 19, and 26. Please sign up on the sheets in the hallway if you are interested in sponsoring any of these items. Thank you!

“Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day.”

-Sally Koch

ALTAR FLOWER, BULLETIN, AND NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIPS

You can sponsor Altar Flowers for \$35.00/week, Bulletins for \$20.00/week, or our monthly Newsletter for \$40.00/month. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway with your name and dedication next to the date(s) you want to sponsor. Thank you!

If you wish to sponsor Altar Flowers, but don't want to pay the cost for both vases, you can split the cost with another member. Each vase would cost \$17.50 and each sponsor could still include a dedication in the bulletin.

Altar Flower Sponsors:

February 5 – *sponsor needed*
February 12 – *sponsor needed*
February 19 – *sponsor needed*
February 26 – *sponsor needed*

Bulletin Sponsors:

February 5 – *sponsor needed*
February 12 – *sponsor needed*
February 19 – *sponsor needed*
February 26 – *sponsor needed*

Newsletter Sponsor:

sponsored

Church Openers:

February 5 – Jane Battaglieri
February 12 – Richard Gruber
February 19 – Linda Lash
February 26 – Dianne Leininger

Church Greeters:

February 5 – Barbara Auchenbach
February 12 – Nancy Malandra
February 19 – Barbara Auchenbach
February 26 – Nancy Malandra

Lectors:

February 5 – Donna Marks
February 12 – Brenda Reichart
February 19 – Richard Gruber
February 26 – Kate Schuler

Supply Pastor Schedule:

February 5 – Pastor William Fryer
February 12 – Pastor Kenneth Gould
February 19 – Pastor Kenneth Gould
February 26 – Pastor David Kistler

Worship OPPORTUNITIES

EPLER'S UCC: FOOD & FAITH

Do you struggle to get ready for worship on a Sunday morning? Are you looking for worship that is not as liturgical or traditional, but you still want to have an opportunity to worship and receive Communion? Join along with the congregation of Epler's UCC for fellowship and worship with a relaxed feel on **Friday, February 3, 2023** and be lifted up by the Spirit. A fellowship meal will be held at 6:00 p.m. followed by worship at 7:00 p.m. Each month is a different theme and special music. Dress is casual and membership is not required to attend. Children are welcome; and they may benefit from the more informal format of these services. Check out Epler's UCC website at www.eplerschurch.org.

BERKS FESTIVAL OF FAITH

Did you know that every fourth Tuesday of the month, a service is offered for individuals with special needs, intellectual disabilities, and developmental disabilities at Bern Lutheran Church. Their families and friends are also invited for a free supper and worship service. Multiple locations, such as group homes, are contacted to encourage caregivers to bring

residents so they may enjoy the accessible and welcoming atmosphere of the church, music, and congregation.

Anyone is welcome to attend Festival of Faith with their family and friends to enjoy the services

that emphasize "joyful participation." In the words of Pastor David Kistler, "The dedication of the Berks Festival of Faith volunteer team is outstanding, the joy of those attending has been most rewarding, and the welcome that Bern Church has given is appreciated." For more information about the Festival of Faith services, contact Rev. Allen Forsman at 610-682-7028 or Rev. David Kistler at 717-933-8802.



Members of Bern Lutheran Church are invited this year to worship together with local churches for a Midweek Lenten Luncheon and Holy Week services. It will be a light lunch with an informal worship service and prayer time. The schedule is listed below:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| February 22 | <u>Ash Wednesday</u>
Epler's UCC, 7:00 p.m. (no meal) |
| March 1 | Midweek Lenten Worship and Lunch
St. John's Gernant's Church, 12 noon. |
| March 8 | Midweek Lenten Worship and Lunch
Salem Belleman's Church, 12 noon |
| March 15 | Midweek Lenten Worship and Lunch
Location TBD, 12 noon |
| March 22 | Midweek Lenten Worship and Lunch
Epler's UCC, 12 noon |
| March 29 | Midweek Lenten Worship and Lunch
Bethany Evangelical, 12 noon |
| April 6 | <u>Maundy Thursday</u>
St. John's Gernant's Church, 7:00 p.m.
(no meal) |
| April 7 | <u>Good Friday</u>
Salem Belleman's Church, 7:00 p.m.
(no meal) |

HOPE RESCUE MISSION CLOTHING DRIVE

Hope Rescue Mission has been serving the physical and spiritual needs of the homeless in Reading since 1894. Rob Turchi, CEO, has been leading the mission of Hope Rescue Mission for the past 12 years. On **Sunday, February 19**, Rob will be visiting Bern Lutheran Church and giving an introduction and details about a clothing drive we plan to have during the Lenten season. There will be collection bins set up in the narthex so that you can bring in your items at your convenience. Please plan to join us for worship on this Sunday to meet Rob.

FREE NATIVE TREES

Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light is partnering with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) to distribute **FREE** (yes, free!) native trees to churches, municipalities, care homes, individuals, etc.

There will be 2 distribution sites in Berks County: Friedens Lutheran Church, Shartlesville and a site in Birdsboro. Trees will be available in late March/early April.

These trees can be planted in your own yard, in a nearby park or Rails to Trails, at your congregation, your school, or your local library.

This act of hope, faith, and healing will contribute to sequestration of the excess carbon dioxide in our atmosphere that is changing our global weather. Planting native trees can clean up our waterways, beautify our world, and return native plants, that are becoming more scarce, to the food chain that supports native insects, birds, and all God's creatures.

A few notes about the ordering process:

- Be sure to order early! Trees (along with tubes and stakes if you request them) will be available at your selected pick-up location towards the end of March. You will be notified when they arrive.
- Trees are distributed through a **priority county system**, which means you may or may not receive the specific plants you order. You will hear from them if your needs to be adjusted.
- You are welcome to order as many or as few as you wish, placing a separate order for each planting location. You are responsible to ensure you have permission to plant at your location of choice.



- If you need help in being sure the plants you order will fit your planting site. For native plant information please visit [Morton Arboretum](#). This site also has great pictures of the plants. If you click on the links on the homepage for each native tree or shrub, you'll find useful information on where the plant will best thrive, what light conditions it needs, how big it gets and whether you need more than one plant to create seeds.
- You will receive a copy of your order to your selected email address. If you have any issues ordering or have questions, contact Greg Williams by email at wacmbok@aol.com or text/call him at 215.242.0854.

Happy planting!

Greg Williams

Creation Care Coordinator for CBF Partnership

[Order your native trees here!](#)



(* Denotes 80 years young)

5	Joslyn Spieker
12	Tanner Mountz
20	Julia Greenwood
20	Margaret Spieker
21	Nancy Rickenbach *
22	Debra Beissel
22	Laura Berger
22	Stacey Reifsnnyder
24	Sandra Schucker
25	Michael Leh
25	April Riegel
25	Shawn Slusser
28	Donna Giles



6 Ronald and Phyllis Stonefelt (63 years)

ASH WEDNESDAY'S WAKE-UP CALL

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

With these words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of all that God entrusts to us.

Ash Wednesday, which falls on February 22, teaches us that we are mortals, after all. It crushes our ego, dispels our pretensions and drives us deep into God's mysteries: Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What's really important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

We are dust. Yes, but we are God's dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each a speck of "dust" created by God billions of years ago. God put us together from the stuff of the universe.

- Therefore, we are quite literally "earthy" beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. As part of creation, we work to preserve, protect and sustain creation.
- Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy living.

We are breath. We are "dust" into which God has "breathed the Holy breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).

- Therefore, every breath we take is holy, reminding us of God's life force in us.
- Therefore, we look to God to align our lives with God's holy realities of peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

Our time is brief. Our "dust" will return to the earth someday. We are mortal.

- Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
- Therefore, we do not cling to possessions, knowing that we hold onto them only for a little while.
- Therefore, we fill our lives with treasures of lasting value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.

This Lent, spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and

mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

--Rob Blezard

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

MEMBERS:

Sandsbar and Arlene Ensinger, Pauline Shuman, Lisa Miller, Tina Hissinger, George Schaeffer, Tim Moyer, Jane Schaeffer, Myra Bernhart, and Ruth Keeney

FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Family and friends of Pastor Paul Hoh, Alex Vasquez, Katelyn Hotzman, Jim Maurer, Paul, Sheri Mafeo, Bishop Christopher deForest, Eleanor, Shannon Helms, Ann Skinner, Glenva, Warren, Courtney Davis, Giselle Davis, Joanne King, Tim Brown, Robin Brown, Matt DeLeon, Marcia Stoudt, Pastor Joyce Seip, Peter and wife, Bill and Joan Carpenter, Arthur W. Zimmerman, Natalie, Bob Stoner, Ashley Rizzuto, Philip Triantis, Mike, Peggy Deemer, Joe and Karen Young, Brian, Jamie Hey, Glenn Jones, Kailey, Renee Fullmer, Patrick, Susan, Owen Hey, Joyce, Rev. Fred Foerster, Brenda Frey, and Lesley Wegman

(If you would like to add anyone to our prayer list, please contact Korinne in the church office. Please also notify her of anyone that could be removed.)

CHURCH COUNCIL

At our worship service on Sunday, January 8, the following members were installed as council officers and those members who are continuing on council:

Michael Braucher, President
Richard Gruber, Vice President
Theresa Shurr, Secretary
David Hartman, Treasurer
Patricia Yocum, Financial Secretary
Jane Battaglieri
Christopher Becker
Matthew Kasisky
Linda Lash
Dianne Leininger
Erin Readinger

We congratulate them and thank them for their continued service to Bern Lutheran Church.



Children of the LIGHT

This craft celebrates that now we are light in the Lord (see Ephesians 5:8).

What you need:

- A gallon zip-top plastic bag
- Permanent markers (dark colors)
- Black construction paper
- White cardstock
- Scissors

What you do:

1. Draw a self-portrait on the outside of the bag. Add details.
2. Insert the black paper and set the bag flat on a table. It should be tough to see your picture now.
3. On the white cardstock, draw a picture of a flashlight with a long beam of light coming out. Color the flashlight but leave the beam white.
4. Cut out the flashlight and light beam. Place them in the bag, over the black paper. When the white beam covers the black background under your picture, you can see your self-portrait clearly.

PUZZLE



The light of forgiveness

The Lord is full of mercy and light. What happens when we confess our sins to God?



Directions:

Use the coded shapes
to fill in the blanks and
complete 1 John 1:7-9, NIV.

But if we _____ in the _____, as he is in the _____,
we have _____ with one another, and the _____
of Jesus, his Son, _____ us from all sin. If we claim to be
without sin, we deceive ourselves and the _____ is not in us.
If we _____ our sins, he is _____ and just and will
_____ us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:7-9, NIV

Answer: walk, light, fellowship, blood, punishes, truth, confess, faithful, forgive



SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA



FriEDEN'S: An Amazing Garden Story

A few weeks after the lockdown in the spring of 2020, I called a neighbor in town who had a garden in her front yard. It's Shartlesville, and the PA Dutch are used to their yards looking *just so,* so I knew this was a brave woman who loved gardening vegetables more than public opinion. I also knew she didn't have room for pumpkins in her small yard, so I called and proposed we plant some viney crops up on our church property. She agreed and even had the seeds, gardening skills, and ideas, so after consultation with council, the garden was born. We sent our crop to the neighboring UCC congregation's food pantry, and with the excess had physically- distant free produce giveaways.

In 2021, we expanded the garden by half, to about 50 by 75 feet. We watered each plant via a recycled gallon milk jug with a pinprick in the bottom. The plants were happy, but our backs were not. It took 45 minutes to an hour to water all the jugs, which we did nearly every day because the garden is in full sun. The black plastic we used for weed suppression became a slip-and-slide while we irrigated.

In 2022, we were able to install a drip irrigation system that did not require filling milk jugs and weed suppression fabric that was not slippery. The fabric required using a blow torch to make holes for planting but will be able to be used for multiple years. The irrigation only required turning on the spigot and letting it run for several hours, which was a true God-send because we had some unexpected health issues on the garden team that limited our volunteer force! It was an extraordinarily dry summer, so the grant came just in time.

This past summer we had 21 people volunteer in the garden, took produce to 5 food pantries or senior centers, including Cafe Esperanza in Reading, and welcomed 29 people into the garden at a joint VBS. Not only are we feeding our neighbors with free, fresh, pesticide-free produce, but we are also getting to know our neighbors, developing new connections in the congregation among volunteers, teaching children about food insecurity and the joy of gardening, and passing on agricultural wisdom.

Submitted by Pastor Inge Williams

SYNOD
ASSEMBLY



2023

GOING
BEYOND
DEATH
TO LIFE

JUNE
1-3

What's happening at Kalahari?

- Plenaries full of important decisions like the next Vice President of the Synod and the next Secretary.
- Small group breakouts with important and timely topics like small rural ministry, growing young, anti-racism, innovative worship, and more...
- Vibrant worship featuring Agape (David Scherer) and spoken word poet, Joe Davis.
- Free time activities and gatherings.
- And an incredible guest preacher for our festival worship (announcement coming soon.)

*We're hard at work planning
this incredible event!*

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SO, LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER,
RECHARGE, WORSHIP, AND ENGAGE IN
THE BUSINESS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

FEBRUARY 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 	3 6:00pm-Food and Faith Worship Service, Epler's UCC 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond	4 9:00am-1:00pm- Hawk Mountain Boy Scout Council (Social Hall and Classroom use)
5 <u>Fifth Sunday after Epiphany</u> 9:00am–Confirmation Class 10:00 am–Worship 11:00am–Sunday School Opener: Jane Battaglieri Lector: Donna Marks Greeter: Barb Auchenbach	6	7	8 6:00pm-Hawk Mountain Boy Scouts	9 Korinne – Out of Office	10 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond	11
12 <u>Sixth Sunday after Epiphany</u> 9:00am–Confirmation Class 10:00 am–Worship 11:00 am–Sunday School Opener: Richard Gruber Lector: Brenda Reichart Greeter: Nancy Malandra	13	14 	15	16	17 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond	18
19 <u>Transfiguration of Our Lord</u> 9:00am–Confirmation Class 10:00 am–Worship 11:00am–Sunday School -Congregational Meeting after worship -Rob Turchi, Hope Rescue Mission Opener: Linda Lash Lector: Richard Gruber Greeter: Barb Auchenbach	20 7:00pm-Council Meeting President's Day	21 9:00am-Berks Quilters Guild All-day Workshop (Social Hall) Newsletter Deadline	22 7:00pm-Ash Wednesday Community Worship Service at Epler's UCC	23	24 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond	25
26 <u>First Sunday in Lent</u> 9:00am–Confirmation Class 10:00 am–Worship 11:00am–Sunday School Opener: Dianne Leininger Lector: Kate Schuler Greeter: Nancy Malandra	27	28 3:00pm–Festival of Faith				