



MAILING ADDRESS:

Bern Evangelical Lutheran Church
820 West Leesport Road
Leesport, PA 19533
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Email: bernlutheranchurch@gmail.com
Website: www.berchurch.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 December is sponsored by the Hissinger Family in memory of our friend, Danny Eagle.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following discussions took place and decisions made at our council meeting on Monday, November 13th:

- We will be collecting Christmas cards to send to our homebound members.
- It was voted on and approved to allow Bern Township to use our facilities for their township meetings while there is construction going on in the building.
- A motion was passed to approve Brenda Reichart, and Dick Greener to serve as new council members. David Hartman was approved and has agreed to stay on council and continue to serve as Treasurer.

OUR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING will be on **Monday, December 18, at 7:00 p.m.**

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles for the January *Bern Bugle* are due by **Tuesday, December 19th.**

CONFIRMATION CLASS AND ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

Below is the schedule for our Confirmation classes and the acolytes scheduled for the month of December:

	<u>Acolyte</u>
December 3 – Class	Aidan Slusser
December 10 – Class	Aiden Angstadt
December 17 – Class	No Acolyte
December 24 – NO Class	Aiden Angstadt and Derian Readinger
December 31 – NO Class	TBA

NATIVITY PRESENTATION

Please plan to join us for worship on **Sunday, December 17**, when the Catechetical Class, with help from other children and youth from the congregation, will present a short nativity program at the beginning of the worship service.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

All children are invited to join us for Sunday School after the worship service from 11:00-11:30 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no Sunday School on **Sunday, December 24th and 31st.**



Join us on **Sunday, December 24, at 7:00 p.m.** for our Christmas Eve worship service. We will be celebrating the birth of Jesus. Pastor Kenneth Gould will be leading our worship service which will include Candlelight, Holy Communion, and a Children's Sermon. **PLEASE NOTE: There will be no morning worship service on this Sunday.**

POINSETTIA ORDERS

We will be decorating our sanctuary with red and white poinsettias for our Christmas Eve worship service. The cost is \$6.00 per plant. If you would like to order any plants, please return the enclosed order form and your payment to the church office or place in the offering plate by **Thursday, December 14th.** You can also order online by clicking [here](#). A minimum of 60 plants (with 25 of those being white) are needed to decorate the poinsettia tree. Thank you!



STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFTS

If you would like to contribute towards monetary Christmas gifts for our Designated Pastor, Gary Rarick, our organist, Jane Battaglieri, or our Secretary, Korinne Hotzman, please place your donation in an envelope and mark the amount you are contributing to each staff member's gift. If nothing is noted on the envelope, your contribution will be divided evenly between the staff members. Envelopes can be found on the offering table in the narthex. You may place your contribution in the offering plate or mail it to the church. All contributions must be received by **Sunday, December 17th.** Thank you!

THANKOFFERING COLLECTION

A total of **\$588.00** was collected on Sundays, November 5, 12, and 19 for under-privileged children in Berks County. Thank you all for your support!

ANGEL TREE

We had such an overwhelming response to the Angel Tree last year that we have added a few more names. Twenty-five children from the Berks County Children & Youth Services are in need of some Christmas cheer. Names of children with some gift suggestions can be found on a tree in the narthex. If you would like to participate, please choose a name from the tree that you would like to shop for. Wrapped gifts must be returned to the church no later than **Sunday, December 17,** so that they can be picked up and delivered to the children for Christmas. We hope this provides as much joy shopping for the gifts as it does to the children receiving the gifts. Thank you for your generous support!



2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Member offering envelopes for 2024 are now available for pick up in the hallway at church. Please pick up your envelopes as well as family members on Sunday morning. You can also stop in during Korinne's office hours to pick them up.

CHAD WATER PROJECT

During the month of October, Bern Lutheran as well as Epler's UCC took a collection to contribute to a water project for Chad, Africa. Thanks to all of you for your support, the total amount collected was **\$1,477.00.**

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

It is time to begin thinking about and preparing the Committee reports to be included in our 2023 Annual Report. Please have your reports submitted to the church office no later than **Sunday, January 14,** so that they can be assembled and available for members prior to our Congregational Meeting in February 2024. Thank you!

ALTAR FLOWER, BULLETIN, AND NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIPS

Sign-up sheets for 2024 are now available on the bulletin board in the hallway. Prices remain the same as last year with Altar Flowers costing \$35.00/week, Bulletins for \$20.00/week, and the 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 a loved one, or to the Glory of God. You may also contact Korinne in the church office to sponsor any of these items.

WORSHIP Opportunities

FOOD & FAITH WORSHIP SERVICE

Epler's UCC will be holding their Food & Faith worship service on **Friday, December 1**, with a fellowship meal at 6:00 p.m. The worship service will begin at 7:00 p.m. The theme for this worship service is "Blue Christmas: Dealing with Loss Around the Holidays." During this worship service, we will be remembering our loved ones and recognizing our feelings of sadness that can happen around the Christmas season. Come out for an evening of worship and fellowship.

TRAVELER'S CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Will you be traveling for Christmas and unable to join Bern's Christmas Eve worship service on December 24th? Are you concerned that the sanctuary will be too full for you at our regular Christmas Eve worship? Epler's UCC, 1151 West Leesport Road, is offering an opportunity to experience Christmas Eve worship in person on **Wednesday, December 20, at 7:30 p.m.** This service will be exactly the same as our December 24th service and will include all of the regular Christmas Eve worship experiences, such as singing Christmas hymns, hearing the Christmas Story, and the candlelight singing of *Silent Night*. You are welcome to join them.

CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE

Join along with the congregation of Epler's UCC for worship on Christmas Eve morning at 10:30 a.m. This will be a family service with easy-to-follow liturgy and will be led with youth participation. The theme for this service is "Christmas Memories" and will include some funny stories, heartwarming memories from members of the church, and special music. Feel free to join them.

CHRISTMAS CAMP 2023

Epler's UCC will be holding a Christmas Camp for kids on **Saturday, December 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Although the camp is free, registration is required. Please go to www.eplerschurch.org or email Pastor Gary Rarick at pastorrarick@gmail.com. See the flyer on the bulletin board for more details or for registration forms.

CHRISTMAS VESPER SERVICE

St. Daniel's Lutheran Church, 480 Big Spring Road, Robesonia, will be featuring the Reading Pops Orchestra and vocal soloists on **Sunday, December 10, at 4:00 p.m.** Preservice music beginning at 3:30 p.m. by the Brass Ensemble. Held at the Conrad Weiser High School Auditorium. A freewill offering will be taken. For more information, call 610-693-5145 or go to www.stdaniels.com.



CHRISTMAS COOKIE FELLOWSHIP

You are invited to join us on Sunday, December 3, before worship between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and again after worship coffee, cookies, and fellowship.

Hope to see you there!

Sponsored by the Worship & Music Committee

REDNER'S GROCERY RECEIPTS

Thank you to everyone who brings in Redner's receipts. When you shop at Redner's with a rewards card, bring your receipts to church and place them in the box in the hallway near the guest book. Those small pieces of paper turn into dollars for our congregation. Thank you all!

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Just a reminder to consider designating your "Choice Dollars" to Bern Lutheran Church. This program continues to benefit our church through your quarterly designations. Thrivent's phone number is 800-847-4836. When you hear the menu of options, simply say "Choice Dollars" and you will be connected to an operator to conduct the transaction. To make your designation by email, go to www.Thrivent.com and fill in the necessary information. Thank you!

INK CARTRIDGE RECYCLING

Don't forget to bring in your used ink cartridges to be recycled. Look for the box in the narthex.

Thank you

Dear Bern Evangelical Family,

Your gracious gift of \$250.00 received on October 23, 2023, is a blessing to those seeking refuge and life restoration at Hope Rescue Mission. Your support enables us to provide food, shelter, clothing, and guidance to over 1,200 individuals annually, including homeless veterans and many who are battling addiction. You are a valued partner in this ministry, and we could not manage all we do without your faithful financial and prayer support.

As we celebrate 129 years of service to the homeless of Berks County, we praise the Lord for our faithful partners who give sacrificially to feed the hungry, provide safe shelter for the homeless, and restore broken lives! – Sincerely, Robert Turchi, CEO Hope Rescue Mission of Reading



Dear Bern Lutheran Church,

Sometime in the hustle and bustle of our work world we forget to stop and say thank you to everyone that helps make Schuylkill Valley Pantry, Inc. a success.

So we all here at Schuylkill Valley Food Pantry, Inc. wish to express our great appreciation of your food, monetary, and personnel donations throughout 2023. We could not do what we do without receiving donations from churches like yours. It is a true blessing and allows us to continue to provide assistance to those in need within our community. – Thank you and God bless, Samuel J. Reimert, President/Treasurer, Schuylkill Valley Food Pantry



Many thanks for all the prayers, cards and flowers. God brought me to it, and he'll bring me through it. I miss you all, and hope to see you soon. Peace be with you, Donna Marks



Thank you so very much for helping with the arrangements for Pastor David Roper to attend the Anniversary service and dinner. He had a splendid time. He's been raving about it since he got home! Please let everyone know how touched he was by the warm welcome he received. Prayers for 25 more years! – Sincerely, Marcy Riley

“It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air.” —W.T. Ellis

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR OUR HOMEBOUNDED MEMBERS

You may have noticed a table with a basket on it in the hallway on your way into church. We are collecting cards to send warm wishes to our homebound members for Christmas and to let them know we are thinking about them. All you have to do is sign a card, put the member's name(s) on the envelope, and place it in the basket. We will take care of the rest. You can also mail your own card. Members' addresses are in your directory. If you need a current directory, please contact the church office. Please have your cards to church by **Sunday, December 3rd**. Thank you!

Bern's homebound members are:

Caroline Eichner
E. Berry and Margaret Hey
Ruth Keeney
Jack and June Kochan
Arlene Lengel
Ann Myers
George and Jane Schaeffer
Pauline Shuman
Phyllis Stonefelt



IN OUR



Thoughts and Prayers

MEMBERS:

Lucy Moyer, Jane Battaglieri, Brooke Noecker, Evelyn Drobnick, Robert Hissinger, Donna Marks, Pauline Shuman, Lisa Miller, Tim Moyer, Myra Bernhart, and Ruth Keeney

FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Jim Michalowski, Sherry Lockhart, Eva Fox, Kelly Cockrum, Terri Hine, Ziomara, Ginny and Nelson Eyrich, Nick Odagis, Lara Pappas, Danielle Roberts, Alex Vasquez, Paul, Sheri Mafeo, Eleanor, Glenva, Warren, Courtney Davis, Giselle Davis, Joanne King, Tim Brown, Robin Brown, Matt DeLeon, Pastor Joyce Seip, 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, 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.)



(* Denotes 80 years young)

- 3 Andrew Kasisky
- 7 Margaret Hey *
- 15 Theresa Shurr
- 17 Pastor Kenneth Gould
- 17 JoAnn Ketz
- 18 Nicholas Braucher
- 20 Nancy Malandra *
- 21 Matthew Reichart
- 23 Jeffrey Shurr
- 27 Beverly Moyer
- 27 Barbara Speicher
- 31 Marke Wismer



- 7 Richard and Christine Gruber (49 years)
- 7 Jeffrey and Sandra Schucker (49 years)
- 14 Richard and YuYun Greener (21 years)
- 26 Michael and Brenda Reichart (42 years)



MERRY
Christmas
 &
HAPPY NEW YEAR

"Wishing you a Christmas that's
 merry and bright!"

INCOME AND ATTENDANCE

<u>For the Week Ending</u>	<u>Income toward Budget Expenses</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
11/05/2023	\$3,163.00	60
11/12/2023	\$4,470.00	140
11/19/2023	\$4,232.00	48
11/26/2023	\$2,171.00	52

***\$3,259.19 is needed per week to meet 100%
of the Budgeted Expenses***

Budget Report – Year to Date

	<u>October</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$12,436.00	\$148,070.00
Congregational		
Fund Raising	<u>309.00</u>	<u>2,997.00</u>
Total Funds	<u>\$12,745.00</u>	<u>\$151,067.00</u>

<u>Actual Income / Expenses</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budgeted Income	\$11,502.00	\$108,297.00
Non-Budgeted Income	1,243.00	42,770.00*
Budgeted Expenses	7,900.00	81,135.00
Non-Budgeted Expenses	1,727.00	21,568.00
Benevolence to be Paid	344.00	344.00
Surplus/Deficit	+2,774.00	+48,020.00

* \$42,770.00 includes \$27,513.00 for the sound system.

<u>Benevolence</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>2023 Pledge</u>
Synod and ELCA	\$ 1,090.00	\$3,000.00
World Hunger	787.00	1,500.00
Mission Field	435.00	1,300.00
W.B.M.D.	260.00	600.00
Other	2,967.00	

<u>Capital Improvement Acct.</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Member Contributions	\$125.00	\$1,150.00
Interest	74.67	519.61
Expense	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
		\$44,112.69

<u>Savings Account</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$.00	\$ 728.00
Interest	.00	2,732.90
Expenses	.00	<u>.00</u>
		\$235,881.67

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.

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. Thank you!

Altar Flower Sponsors:

December 3 – The Schuler Family
December 10 – Chris and Rick Gruber
December 17 – Phil Ketz
December 24 – Poinsettias
December 31 – *sponsor needed*

Bulletin Sponsors:

December 3 – The Schuler Family
December 10 – Barry Shurr
December 17 – Dianne Leininger
December 24 – *sponsor needed*
December 31 – *sponsor needed*

Newsletter Sponsor:

The Hissinger Family

Church Openers:

December 3 – Christopher Becker
December 10 – Christopher Becker
December 17 – Linda Lash
December 24 – Richard Gruber
December 31 – Jane Battaglieri

Church Greeters:

December 3 – Barbara Auchenbach
December 10 – Nancy Malandra
December 17 – Barbara Auchenbach
December 24 – Barbara Auchenbach
December 31 – Nancy Malandra

Lectors:

December 3 – Brenda Reichart
December 10 – Beth Hartman
December 17 – David Greenwood
December 24 – Richard Gruber
December 31 – Barbara Braucher

Supply Pastor Schedule:

December 3 – Pastor William Fryer
December 10 – Pastor Kenneth Gould
December 17 – Pastor Kenneth Gould
December 24 – Pastor Kenneth Gould
December 31 – Pastor David Kistler



During the month of December, we will be collecting non-perishable food items for the Schuylkill Valley Food Pantry. Please place your donations on the table in the narthex. If you are able to help, the following items are needed:

cereal	box of crackers
peanut butter	packaged rice
stuffing mix	packaged oatmeal
boxed potatoes	packaged pasta
macaroni and cheese	spaghetti sauce
canned fruit	chicken noodle soup
canned tomatoes	tomato soup
canned tuna	canned corn
dessert mix	canned mixed vegetables
jar of applesauce	canned carrots
canned sweet potatoes	canned green beans
cranberry sauce	canned peas

Thank you for your donations!

ADVENT MEANINGS

During Advent, which begins this year on December 3, many churches and families use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope or creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility or penitence).

The four candles that each represent a week in Advent also signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent his only Son to earth to die in our place.

-Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

“LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH”
by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson

With all that has been happening in our world lately, we felt it appropriate to sing this hymn during our worship service. So, on Sunday, November 5, 2023, we sang the hymn “Let There Be Peace on Earth”. Did you ever wonder when and how this hymn originated? Why was this hymn written and by whom?

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Father,
Brothers all are we.
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me,
Let this be the moment now.
With ev’ry step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow.

To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

One summer evening in 1955, a group of 180 teenagers of all races and religions, meeting at a workshop high in the California mountains locked arms, formed a circle and sang a song of peace. They felt that singing the song, with its simple basic sentiment—“Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me,” helped to create a climate for world peace and understanding.

When they came down from the mountain, these inspired young people brought the song with them and started sharing it. And, as though on wings, “Let There Be Peace on Earth” began an amazing journey around the globe. It traveled first, of course with the young campers back to their homes and schools, churches and clubs. Then the circle started by the teenagers began to grow. Soon the song was being shared in all fifty states—at school graduations and at PTA meetings, at Christmas and Easter gatherings and as part of the celebration of Brotherhood Week. It was a theme for Veteran’s Day, Human Rights Day and U. N. Day. 4H Clubs and the United Auto Workers began singing it. So did the American Legion, the B’nai B’rith, the Kiwanis Clubs and CORE. It was taped, recorded, copied, printed in song books, and passed by word of mouth.

The song spread overseas to Holland, England, France, Germany, Lebanon. To South America, Asia and Australia. The Maois in New Zealand sang it—even the Zulus in Africa sang it.

Professional singers took it up. Among them, Ernie Ford, Andy Williams, Danny Kaye, Nat Cole, the Smothers Brothers, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, Eddie Albert, Edie Adams, John Gary, Pearl Bailey, Roberta Shore, Champ Butler, the King Sisters, Mary Tyler Moore, John Raitt, Robie Lester, Liberace, Bob Crosby, the International Children’s Choir, Jack Halloran, Gisele MacKenzie, Richard Summers, Lloyd Bridges, Patti Page, Angela Cartwright, the Young Americans, Carole Wells, Jack Smith, Pat Boone, Johnny Mathis, Rhonda Fleming, Stan Melton, Norman Luboff, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Lorne Greene, and Ted Mack TV shows, and Father Keller’s Christopher TV series.

The song began to win awards. “Let There Be Peace on Earth” was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge for “Outstanding achievement in helping to bring about a better understanding of the American Way of Life.” It also received a Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

This simple thought, “Let There Be Peace on Earth, and Let it Begin with Me” first born on a mountain top in the voices of youth, continues to travel heart to heart—gathering in people everywhere who wish to become a note in a song of understanding and peace—peace for all mankind.



BERN LUTHERAN CHURCH 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHURCH BUILDING **Sunday, November 12, 2023**

The following is Pastor Kenneth Gould's Sermon from our anniversary worship service on Sunday, November 12, 2023. If you were not able to attend this service, we thought it would be nice to share Pastor Gould's sermon with you.

There is a popular song from 1955 which some of you likely remember. I was only 6 years old when that song first appeared, and while I don't recall it from then, it was recorded by a number of other groups since that year. It is called "Moments to Remember." Its refrain, so to speak goes like this, "When other nights and other days may find us gone our separate ways, we will have these moments to remember." Moments to remember—many of you have been members of this congregation all your life, you have moments to remember; some of you have generations of your family that anchor you to this church. Others, like me, are new to Bern Church membership, but I hope you still have moments to remember. Some of you may also remember from your past experiences here, recollections of this church's history. We certainly cannot bring to mind all that has happened in the life of Bern Church but let us recall the earliest history.

Bern Lutheran Church was formed in 1836. History tells us that it was in the winter of that year that a group of German Lutherans in Bern and neighboring Penn Township started Bern Church. It seems that the idea to form a congregation for Lutherans did not spring up in just a few months. German Reformed records indicate that there were baptisms from at least as early as 1739, and so in 1836, the German Bern Reformed already in existence, organized a union church with the Bern Lutherans joining in 1837 with the building of the third church on the same site where the Bern UCC building now exists.

What was happening in the world that was vastly different from what we know now? Here are a few highlights from 1836: from February 23 until March 6 the Battle of the Alamo raged in Texas. On June 15 Arkansas became the 25th state in the union. On July 1 James Smithson bequested money to found the Smithsonian Institute which is still in existence as our country's national museum. On December 7 Martin Van Buren was declared the 8th President of the United States. Those are just a few highlights.

Arrangements between the Bern Lutherans and the Bern Reformed seemed to have gone on with few if any differences recorded. The fourth Bern Church building, the one currently in existence, was erected in 1919 and is used by the UCC's. After all, by then the people had intermarried and the difference between Lutherans and Reformed theology had become less important to the average lay person. There were more important things to be concerned about in daily life. The stock market crash, the Great Depression, World War II were all part of the experience in Bern Township just as they were around the country and indeed the world. Indeed, as we entered the 1980's and 1990's, church life became less of a priority. And then the daring 1990's arrived. What was happening in the 90's? Specifically, what was happening in 1998, the year that this building was built? Here are just a few highlights.

On January 4, 1998, there was a massive ice storm across North America. I imagine most people in this area took it as they did other winter storms; they dealt with it as they did with other winter storms. As one of my church members would say of such things: "The Father put it there and the SUN will take it away!" On February 28 the War in Kosovo began. On April 10 the Northern Ireland Good Friday agreement was signed, which actually ended warfare and murder in Great Britain. On May 7 Mercedes Benz bought the Chrysler Corporation for \$40 billion. On June 5 an AWW strike began that lasted 5 weeks. On December 1 Exxon Mobil was created for \$73.7 billion making it the world's largest corporation. And on November 22, 1998, you dedicated this building. Bern Lutheran Church was dedicated with the Rev. James Wolford serving as Presiding Minister. Many of the same people involved then in the church's ministry are still involved today. I will not begin to name them. Many of you know them, and we heartily thank them for their dedication and continued involvement. If they had not had a vision and a commitment, what you experience every Sunday when you come for worship would not exist. But did you know these things about this wonderful building? It is 12,900 square feet, in the shape of a cross, the sanctuary can seat 220, the architect and builder was Arthur Funk & Sons of Lebanon, the building in 1998 was valued at \$1 million and the furnishings at \$400,000. The Interim Pastor at the time of the Dedication Service was Pastor Donald Beck. The church council president was Michael Werley, and the building committee chairman was Elwood Speicher.

Much more than that, I'll tell you in a minute, although I am sure documentation exists somewhere in the church's minutes. But take time to look around and marvel at the wonder that is here, but then don't stop there. Think of the services that have taken place here, of the ministries continued after, during and now in this place. All of that is important and we should never lose track of the importance of a congregation's church building. But then also pause to remember that this building is important because of what happens here, because of the people who devote their time, talent, and treasure to make it happen. Buildings, church buildings are important. They become the social center of the people of the congregation who first and foremost come here to hear God's word preached and the sacrament celebrated. That is the focus of the church according to the Augsburg Confession, one of the documents which since June 25, 1530, have defined what the church is foremost and what Lutherans have always used as the definition of what a Christian church is. We don't put much attention to that anymore it seems, but throughout its history, the Lutheran Church around the world has!!

So we come here, first to hear the Word and to receive Baptism and Holy Communion. To be sure a lot more happens here and in any other church, but that is what this church was built for. But that fact that those things happen here, is because there are people, the baptized people of God, who have come together as a community that gives this building meaning. We cannot lose sight of that dream. You are the people of God, established in this place, in this beautiful and serviceable building to hear God's Word, to receive the Sacraments, to worship and adore He who is the Lord and Savior of the whole world and to carry that message to the world in whatever way God provides you. May you continue to be faithful to that calling and may you be assured that God is with you each day of life and unto eternal life. Amen.

BERN LUTHERAN CHURCH HISTORY

(How It All Began)

We are not sure if this history was written by the late Terry Van Lear, so if anyone knows definitely who wrote it, please let the church office know. Thank you!

This all started in 1992, when one of our members (Robert Egan) named us in his will. We were to receive a bequest from his will, but we had to meet one of the following three conditions:

1. Merge the two congregations into one Lutheran congregation;
2. The Lutheran congregation buy out the UCC congregation and we stay and they leave and build; or
3. The UCC congregation buy out the Lutheran congregation and they stay and we leave and build a new church;

or we could do none of the above and remain a union church. We had ten years to decide or the money would go to maintain historical buildings in Berks County.

Many meetings were held, formal, informal, and parking lot meetings to discuss the pros and cons of the three conditions. The UCC congregation helped us make a decision. They didn't want to lose their identity, and since they were the first congregation at Bern, they wanted to remain. Thus, we could remain as we were or leave and build a new church.

The decision was made to build a new church, but there were four obstacles standing in our way.

1. We didn't own any land to build a new church.
2. We had no plans or idea of what type of building we wanted.
3. We didn't have a contractor to build the church.
4. There wasn't much money to pay for this project.

We started with faith and the belief that "with the help of God anything is possible." We started looking at what had to be done to overcome these four obstacles.

On October 1, 1995, we held a Building Fund Kick-Off Dinner and adopted the motto – "To Give –To Build–To Grow into the 21st Century." A Building Committee and a Dissolution Committee were formed. The Dissolution Committee was to negotiate the terms for dissolution. The Building Committee started the following:

1. Search for land along the 183 corridor;
2. Search for a contractor, by interviewing contractors with church building expertise; and
3. Search for plans of the type of building we wanted

We traveled to many fairly new churches in Berks, Bucks, Chester, Lancaster, and Schuylkill counties. We got a lot of good ideas but, when we put them all together, we knew we couldn't afford the building.

Then one of our members, the late Warren Lengel, suggested we go see a new Lutheran church in Gordon, PA. On our first visit there, I think, many of us decided this was the basic design we were looking for. Several more trips were made to Gordon with other members until the decision was made to go with this basic design—the shape of a cross. One obstacle solved.

Next, we decided on Arthur Funk & Sons as our design builder. This turned out to be a good choice. Second obstacle solved. We then started working on designing the interior to meet our needs.

On April 1997, the dissolution vote was taken by both congregations, with an 80% approval.

On July 31, 1997, we held a joint Dissolution Service with the signing of the agreement.

The search for land continued. Several sites were considered. About this time, West Ridge Development started to develop the Hettinger Farm. We looked at several locations in their plans. At that time, we were looking for about five acres of land. We finally agreed on the area where this church is built, but the grove area was not part of the five acres. Some of our members thought we should have a grove.

October 29, 1997 we signed an agreement to purchase 7.43 acres which included the grove and holding pond. Third obstacle solved.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held on March 1, 1998. We had an old plow and a team of horses supplied by Harry O'Neil. The project was underway and building started soon thereafter. During the building process you could see Dave Braucher and his trusty bulldozer moving ground. For the longest time I wasn't sure what he was doing. One day he moved ground from point A to point B. The next day he seemed to be moving ground from point B to point A, but the finished product proved he did know what he was doing. Good job, Dave!

In 1998, Easter Dawn Services were held at the new church location. It was a very cold morning. On August 23, 1998, the first service was held at the unfinished church—everybody brought lawn chairs—and we placed the date stone at the entrance of the church.

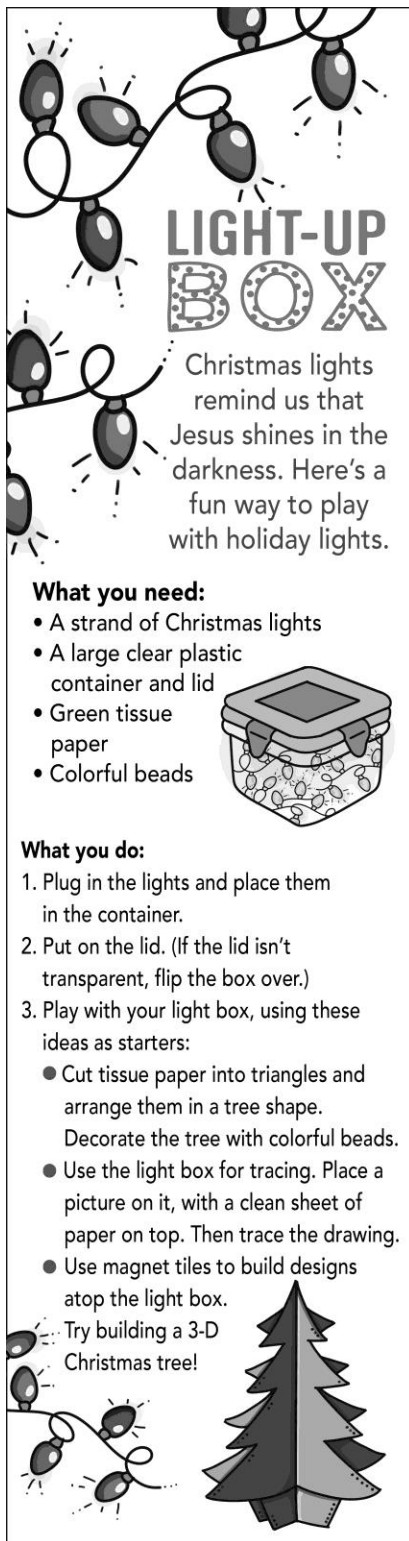
On November 1, 1998, the last joint service was held in the old church.

On November 8, 1998, the first service was held in our new church.

On November 22, 1998, we held a Dedication Service.

The total cost of this project was just under 1.4 million dollars. Our debt on November 1, 1998 was \$300,000.00 with Leesport Bank and \$63,000.00 in member loans.

Today, we complete obstacle four. We celebrate the retirement of this debt—five years from the date of ground-breaking. Thanks to all of you and thank God and our faith and belief that “with the help of God anything is possible.”




LIGHT-UP BOX

Christmas lights remind us that Jesus shines in the darkness. Here's a fun way to play with holiday lights.

What you need:

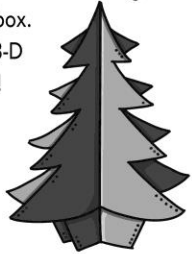

- A strand of Christmas lights
- A large clear plastic container and lid
- Green tissue paper
- Colorful beads



What you do:

1. Plug in the lights and place them in the container.
2. Put on the lid. (If the lid isn't transparent, flip the box over.)
3. Play with your light box, using these ideas as starters:
 - Cut tissue paper into triangles and arrange them in a tree shape. Decorate the tree with colorful beads.
 - Use the light box for tracing. Place a picture on it, with a clean sheet of paper on top. Then trace the drawing.
 - Use magnet tiles to build designs atop the light box.

Try building a 3-D Christmas tree!

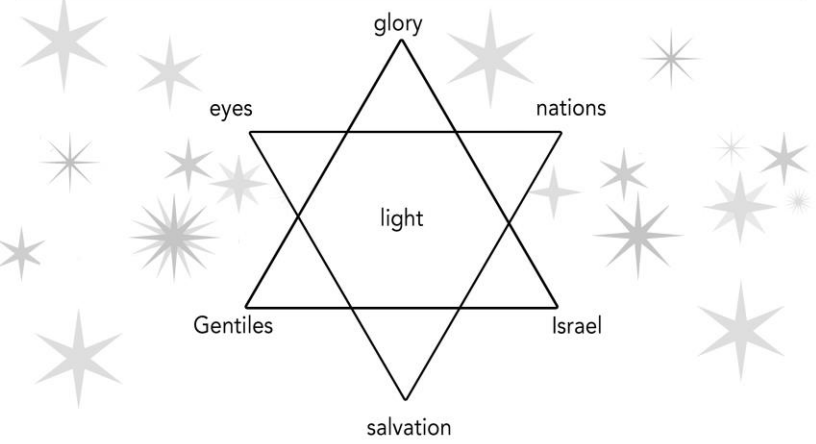



PUZZLE

SIMEON'S SIGHT

When Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to the temple, they heard a special prophecy from Simeon.

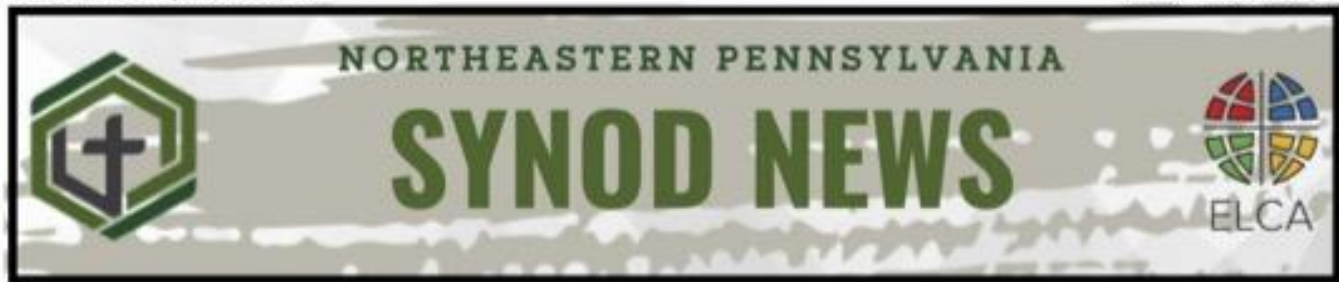
Directions: Using the star key, write the words in the correct spaces to complete Luke 2:30-32, NIV.



"For my _____ have seen your _____, which you have prepared in the sight of all _____: a _____ for revelation to the _____, and the _____ of your people _____."

Luke 2:30-32, NIV

Answers: eyes, salvation, nations, light, Gentiles, glory, Israel



Young Adult in Global Mission : A Year in Senegal

Asalaa maalekum. May God's peace be upon you.

My name is Quentin Bernhard. I recently served with the ELCA program Young Adults in Global Mission—YAGM—in Senegal. My time with YAGM came to an end in July, and Senegal country cohort peers and I returned to the United States. We are among the 23 young adults from the 2022-2023 year who served in accompaniment in four different country programs.

I live in New Tripoli in Lehigh County, and I'm a member of New Life Lutheran Church in New Tripoli. Many individuals and congregations from our synod supported me in my YAGM year. Thank you for your support of my time in Senegal and for the opportunity to be in continuing relationship after my time abroad.

My coming to the United States, to the communities I grew up in in Pennsylvania, was also my leaving a community I grew in—a community I grew in as a Lutheran and as a young person, one I have good friends in. I lived in Yeumbeul Bene Baraque, in western Senegal, for ten months. I lived with a host family in a community. I saw friends every day, many when at my placement site. Connected with our partner organization Senegalese Lutheran Development Services—SLDS—I worked in a community center that serves the community in numerous ways, splitting my time between the library and the mutual fund credit union.

My friends and family in Senegal continue to send me voice messages, reminding me that I am also Maguette Ndiaye, my Senegalese name, and reminding me that we are still connected, even if connected in a different way now. Our relationships and our future—all of our future—is unknown to us. Our faith—and our trust in one another—can allow us to take steps and leaps in that future.

Quentin Bernhard

FINDING HOLY FOCUS IN HUNGERING TIMES BISHOP'S CONFERENCE 2024 FEBRUARY 6-7, 2024

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**FOR ALL ROSTERED LEADERS AND SYNOD AUTHORIZED LAY MINISTERS

God of Goodness, We give you praise for the ordinariness of Christmas - that the day comes the same as any other day. We give you praise that there is no sign in the heavens, and no bright star but the light of your presence in the ordinary birth of the child. We give you praise that unobtrusively you are in the center of human affairs, involved in the struggle of life, and sharing human experience.

We give you praise that out of compassion you take our part, and open to us a new way of life. We pray that this day we shall be able to see its true glory."

— Caryl Micklem



DECEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 6:00pm-Food and Faith Worship Service, Epler's UCC 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond (AA)	2
3 <u>First Sunday in Advent</u> 9:00-10:00am-Fellowship 9:00am-Confirmation Class 10:00am-Worship 11:00am-Sunday School	4	5	6	7	8 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond (AA)	9
10 <u>Second Sunday in Advent</u> 9:00am-Confirmation Class 10:00am-Worship 11:00am-Sunday School 4:00pm-Christmas Vespers Program, St. Daniel's, Robesonia	11	12	13 6:00pm-Hawk Mountain Boy Scouts (Social Hall)	14 POINSETTIA ORDER DEADLINE	15 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond (AA)	16 9:00am-3:00pm- Epler's UCC Christmas Camp
17 <u>Third Sunday in Advent</u> 9:00am-Confirmation Class 10:00am-Worship -Nativity Presentation -Angel Tree Deadline -Staff Christmas Gift Deadline 11:00am-Sunday School	18 7:00pm-Council Meeting	19 9:00am-Berks Quilters Guild Social Hall Rental (all-day workshop) NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	20 7:30pm-Traveler's Christmas Eve Worship Service, Epler's UCC	21	22 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond (AA)	23
24 <u>Fourth Sunday in Advent</u> 10:30am-Christmas Eve Morning Worship Service, Epler's UCC <u>Christmas Eve Worship</u> 7:00pm-Worship No Sunday School/CAT Class	25 	26 4:00-7:00pm-Berks Festival of Faith	27	28	29 6:00-8:00 pm – Frog Pond (AA)	30
31 <u>First Sunday of Christmas</u> 10:00am-Worship NO Sunday School/CAT Class						