

Christ Calls

The Monthly Newsletter of Memorial Lutheran Church
January 2026

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Memorial Lutheran Church
34 E. Orange Street
Shippensburg PA 17257



PASTOR
Rev. Godfred Effisah



PARISH COORDINATOR
Amy Piper
office@memluth.org

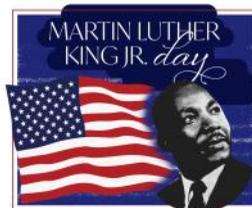


BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR
SENIOR CHOIR DIRECTOR
Kathy Kerr



ORGANIST
Nancy Fogelsanger

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www.memluth.org
office@memluth.org



2026 CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

ELDERS

Linda Basler
Mary Beth Fishel
Susan Lyons

TRUSTEES

Matthew Creek
Ryan Leach
Galen Piper
Bob Snyder – Treasurer

DEACONS

Vicky Conner
Linda Eves
Beth Houser
Tasha Koenig
Ron Luffy
Jacob McCole
Jan Nichols
Cindy Pimental
Karin Vargo

**Pastor Godfred
will be on vacation
January 12-29, 2026.**

**Amy Piper
will be on vacation
January 20-23, 2026**

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Siblings in Christ,

"The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year, but rather that we should have a new soul." - Gilbert K. Chesterton

Glorious and prosperous New Year to you and your family, and welcome to 2026. It is always exciting to be in the new year. The New Year always invites critical reflection, renewal, and the hope that good things will come our way as we journey along. Probably it is because of this hopeful desire that many of us set New Year's resolutions on New Year's Eve or early in the New Year.

As 2026 begins, you may be carrying goals for your health, your jobs, your family, and other things that matter most to you. Whatever you're hoping for, there's no better place to begin than in prayer. Because no matter our own plan for the year, God's plan for us is always the best, and he tells us that he knows the plans he has for us (Jeremiah 29:11).

Whatever your New Year's resolution may be, include the desire to be a good or exemplary disciple in the coming year. Let us focus on deepening our relationship with God through prayer and scripture reading while cooperating to serve with others in building meaningful community and sharing our faith stories intentionally through Christ-like love, joy, and service.

Welcome again to the New Year, and let us keep hope alive, remembering that a fresh start always brings new possibilities. It's important to rethink where our hearts and minds stand, and January is the perfect time to pause and reflect on these questions: What needs to change in my life? How can I renew my soul for Christ in the new year?

May the Lord help us to be thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others. Knowing that our actions and inaction make an impact, and our words carry power.

May the Lord direct your hearts and ways into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

Godfred, Pastor.



**Installation of the 2026 Church Council Members
will be Sunday, January 4, 2026 during
both morning Worship Services.**

COUNCIL NEWS

Church Council met Monday, December 8, 2025.

The meeting was called to order and Concerns and Thanksgivings were shared. Thanksgiving for the response to the community Christmas Carol Walking Tour on December 5th. Thanksgiving for those who helped in any way with the decorating of the sanctuary and to make it ready for Advent, & those who helped with getting ready for Breakfast With Santa and the decorating for it. Concern was expressed that more help was needed. If you appreciate the seasonal trimmings, then be a part of the task. By helping with the decorating, you also learn where these things are stored. It was noted that Sunday, January 11th is when the Baptism of Our Lord is celebrated in worship. Help will be needed to take down the decorations before then and put them away for another year.

Devotions were led by Mary Beth Fishel who chose a reading *Why Pray?* on the theme "Give Your Troubles to God," followed by the opening prayer.

The Pastor reported that the Children's/Youth activity will be bowling at Midway Bowling in Carlisle Sunday, December 14th. Those interested in participating should meet at the bowling alley at 3:00 pm. One service will be held on Sunday, December 21st at 10:00 am when there will be a special Children's sermon time. Children and youth will give a presentation of the nativity. Youth will read from the scriptures while the younger ones (in costume) will portray the event. Thanks to Hope and Jessi Alspaugh for coordinating this special worship offering. Installation of Council members will be on Sunday, January 4th. Sunday, January 11th is the Baptism of Our Lord. In recognition and celebration, Oliver James and Eleanor Povilaitis will be baptized at the 10:00 am worship service; first communion will be celebrated for Liam Creek and Oliver Povilaitis that Sunday as well. Looking ahead, while Pastor Godfred is on vacation January 11th – 29th, Pastor Bill Nienstedt will preside over worship on Sunday, January 18th, and Pastor Alan Wilson will preside on Sunday, January 29th.

Church Property reported that some progress has been made by the Security and Safety Task Force. Ron Madison shared information on the security cameras installed around the outside of Katie's Place and the cameras on the side facing MLC's parking lot. TelePlus serviced the fire alarm system. Stewardship is looking into having a "Dine to Donate" event in the near future. Their next meeting is Tuesday, December 16th. Archives have cleared out the cabinets in the old Archives Rooms. Volunteers will move the two metal cabinets, one from the 5th & 6th grade Sunday School room and one from the closet in the Kindergarten classroom.

The Memorial Outreach Ministry reported that 16 coats were purchase for their Christmas project to give to the Head Start program. Christ Among Neighbors' Blessing Bags received such a generous response that they have enough filled bags until February. Natalie Winter took cookies and visited with a woman who has been visiting and worshipping with Memorial and donating to Outreach projects. The Hound Packs project is

going well. Susan Wenger will order food packs from US Foods for 259 children from the school district. Susan can get these food supplies at a reduced cost which the Outreach Ministry budgets for. The Little Free Pantry has benefitted from the generous donations by our church members, Boy Scout Troop #120, and members of the Strong Women's group.

With no other business to be brought to the table, the regular monthly meeting was concluded. Those members retiring from council are Mary Cox, Demaree Deardorf, Bill Drake, Jane Motter, and Susan Wenger. Mary expressed her thanks and appreciation for their service on Church Council and to Memorial; they were then excused.

The special Church Council meeting was promptly convened. The new members welcomed to Council are Susan Lyons, Elder; Ryan Leach, Trustee; Vicky Conner, Ron Luffy, Jacob McCole, and Cindy Pimental, Deacons. The single item on the agenda for the meeting was the election of officers for 2026. The results are as follows: President, Ron Luffy; Vice President, Karin Vargo; Treasurer, Bob Snyder; Assistant Treasurer, Demaree Deardorff; Congregation Secretary, Linda Basler; Recording Secretary, Amy Piper.

The special meeting was adjourned with the praying of the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting of the Church Council will be Monday, January 12, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Cox



To receive a text message alerting you to weather related church schedule changes, please contact Amy Piper in the church office (office@mendluth.org or 717-532-4614) or write “OPT IN” on a Connection card to receive text message alerts from the church. You **MUST give written/verbal consent to Amy Piper to be placed on the text message list. **Please confirm your cell phone number with Amy Piper also.** After you **“OPT IN”** you will receive a text message asking you to accept text messages. You must approve this request before you can receive a text message from the church office. This phone number will only be used for church text messaging unless you give permission for it to be published in the church directory.**

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH? – Sunday, January 4th

Chase away the chill of winter at the 1st Sunday Lunch of the New Year! Nothing brings comfort on a winter's day than sharing a meal with our church family and friends. We will be serving 'Gravy Train' (ground beef gravy), vegetable du jour, fruit, beverages, and, always appreciated, desserts of your offerings. We look forward to sharing this time of fellowship with you. †



KEEP IN PRAYER

Mary Jane Adams
 Christiana Black
 Gordon Chen
 Jerry Cramer
 Rachel Diaz Debias
 Karen DeShong
 Cheryl Drake
 Cricket Force

Betsy Haller
 Pat Haller
 Pamela Hamilton
 Rose Harris
 Gary Hawbaker
 Sandy Jones
 Pat Maun
 Mary Mensah

Mindy
 Earl Nollenberger
 Ed Pearson
 Chris Pivnickny
 Sarah
 Francine Ritter
 Jean & Bill Robinson
 Jill Rotz

Alicia Schaeffer
 Ron Shuey
 Lynn Slowey
 Wayne Widney



FAITHFUL STEWARDS



Please pray for the family of Evelyn Fuller who passed away on December 1st.

Memorial's Prayer Chain - To have your prayer request placed on the prayer chain, please contact Jean Goldthorpe (717-532-9482), or you may give your request to the church office.

FINANCES



| November 2025 | | | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| FUND | INCOME | EXPENSES | DIFFERENCE | YTD |
| CURRENT | \$26,889 | \$27,304 | \$415 | \$20,046 |
| | Income | Paid | | Needed to be paid |
| BENEVOLENCE | \$4,277 | \$449 | \$3,828 | \$10,071 |

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

| | | | | | |
|---|------------------|----|----------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Oscar Koontz III | 9 | Linda Cooper | 24 | Mary Beth Fishel |
| 2 | Melissa Hayes | 13 | Michael Young | 25 | Kathy Kerr |
| 2 | Rich Sidella | 14 | Judy Royer | 25 | Ron Luffy |
| 5 | Jack Kelley (96) | 14 | Edith Wright | 27 | Zachery Gossert |
| 7 | Nora Lyons | 16 | Linda Benethum | 27 | Joshua Gossert |
| 7 | Allison Drake | 18 | Wendy Tomczak | 28 | Tricia Starry |
| 7 | Jane Holtry (94) | 19 | Emily Davis | 30 | Joyce Villareal |
| 8 | John Drake | 20 | Fred Schneider | | |
| 8 | Linda Brindle | 21 | Vicky Conner | | |

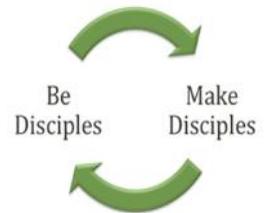
AD 2026: MEMORIAL LUTHERAN YEAR OF DISCIPLESHIP

Matthew 4:19 - "FOLLOW ME AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF PEOPLE."

The primary responsibility of a disciple of Jesus is the Great Commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."- Matthew 28:19-20. In other words, we are called and made disciples so that we can go and make disciples for Jesus. This is a lifelong process which involves praying, giving, going and serving together to make disciples in our family, community and to the ends of the earth. Nothing is more central to the purpose of the Church than this command of Christ.

In response to the Great Commandment and our desire as a faith community to grow both spiritually and numerically, we are dedicating the entire 2026 as a year of discipleship for two main reasons.

1. To rediscover ourselves as disciples
2. To go and make disciples for Jesus by courageously inviting people to our Memorial Lutheran church family for Christ.



We hope to build a faith-filled and disciple-centered church family intentionally but authentically seeking to grow our membership. That is why we are inviting all parishioners to be fully and actively involved in our Year of Discipleship call.

"Discipleship is not limited to what you can comprehend-it must transcend all comprehension." – Martin Luther

Discipleship is a lifelong journey with Jesus Christ.



NURTURING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED TO GIVE



Jesus tells us, "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25) The gifts of God are given *so that* those gifts might be shared with the world. God's gifts are given to help bring the Kingdom a little closer to its fullness. Life cannot be hoarded or it turns in upon itself and you lose it.

The annual stewardship appeal can appear to focus on the church's need to receive. While the church needs financial resources for ministry, this remains God's church and it will flourish in God's time whether we give to it or not. Here God invites us to be part of the kingdom breaking in to the world. Here we are invited to know the joy of extending that mission.

Just as a coin, Christian giving has two sides. For too long, we centered on the side entitled "The Need of the Church". We need to begin concentrating on the side headed "My Need to Give" for giving is an integral part of spiritual life and growth.



More information on these activities can be found at www.lutherancamping.org

Winter Youth Retreat at Kirchenwald

January 2-4, 2026
Grades 3-9
Cost: \$170

NWK Parent's Group - Nawakwa

January 3, 2026
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Tuesday Morning Work Day

Nawakwa
January 6, 2026
9:00 am

MLK Work Weekend

Nawakwa
January 16-19

Chicken and Waffles

Nawakwa
January 18
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Camp Person Meeting

Nawakwa
January 18
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

FAITH FORMATION

FAITH FORMATION: Engaging Hearts and Minds for Christ



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

All parishioners are invited to our weekly Bible Study in the fellowship Hall on Tuesday morning every week except on the second Tuesday of every month. During our Tuesday morning gatherings, we study the lectionary readings for the coming Sunday or thematic study. The Lutheran tradition is firmly rooted in lifelong education, and we believe a healthy study of the Bible is an essential companion to a faith grounded in worship and prayer. All are welcome with no commitment and no registration required.



CHILDREN AND ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Come join us as we explore our faith together. All are welcome to attend, whether you're new to the faith or just wanting to go more in depth with a certain topic. Memorial Lutheran offers Sunday School classes for children and adults from 9:00 am - 10:00 am. Gather with other children and adults believers to delve more deeply into the meaning of Scripture and learn about core theological teachings of the Lutheran Church.

Pastor Godfred is holding a Baptism and First Communion Class on Sunday, January 4 at 9:00 am. Anyone interested in being Baptized or receiving First Communion is encouraged to attend this class.



Women of the ELCA will meet on Wednesday, January 21st at 12 pm. Bring a packed lunch. Dessert is provided. WELCA is open to all women. Invite your friends to join us.

SHIPPENSBURG PRODUCE and OUTREACH

SPO Mission Statement:

Called by the grace of God to love one another, we reach out to those in need with food and/or services.

With prices continuing to rise for healthy food and cuts in the SNAP program, SPO has seen a continued rise in the number of families facing food insecurity issues. As we begin the New Year, we have so much to celebrate! As we reflect on all the changes that occurred in 2025, SPO is proud of our significant advances in our ability to serve the Shippensburg community. Our progress is a direct result of our volunteers' exceptional dedication and the tremendous support from those who generously donated money, time, and resources to SPO. Our first full-time director, Jennifer Crotsley, was hired as part of a grant from one of our agency partners. Additional technology and training enabled us to move to electronic registration in July. With one more distribution in December yet to be reported, here are the statistics from November:



Total Households Served: 1787

Total Children: 1827

Total Adults: 2511

Total Seniors: 1068

Total Individuals: 5406

New Households: 82

New Children: 98

New Adults: 120

New Seniors: 29

Total New Individuals: 247

As we prepare for the coming year, we will continue to nourish our growth to ensure SPO is sustainably rooted in its mission to reach out to those in need in 2026 and beyond. Thank you for all your support through volunteer efforts, donations, and prayers.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy new year!

GOOD & FAITHFUL SERVANTS

Please keep our homebound in your prayers.

Mary Kay Dagenhart
Magnolia of Chambersburg
Room #20
745 Norland Avenue
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Karen Larson
1070 Stouffer Avenue
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Doug & Pat Maun
211 S. Washington Street
Shippensburg, PA 17257

Jeanne Naugle
442 Walnut Bottom Road, F2
Carlisle, PA 17013

Dorothy Railing
117 Cleversburg Road
Shippensburg, PA 17257

Trina Ruth
509 Westover Road
Shippensburg, PA 17257

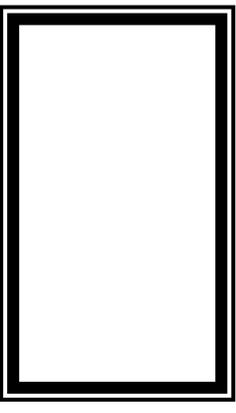


Thanks to our Children and Youth and EVERYONE who helped provide an inspirational Children's Christmas Program!

MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
34 E ORANGE ST
SHIPPENSBURG PA 17257-1993

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL



Welcoming all.

Reaching out in love.

Growing together in Christ.

Worshipping and serving in Jesus' name.