

CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE

JULY & AUGUST 2026
ISSUE NO. 02

Life at the U

FEATURED COMMUNITY EVENT:
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



MISSION STATEMENT

We at Union Lutheran Church believe that we are called to share Jesus' love with our ever-changing, diverse community, as we grow together in Christ. We welcome everyone seeking God's love and grace to participate fully no matter what you look like, where you're from, whom you love, how much money you have, or whatever other labels we use to divide ourselves.

We welcome all gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, ages, races, abilities, and socio-economic statuses, and we are committed to the work of racial equity. Celebrating God's radical welcome, and through our unity in Jesus Christ, we strive to be a community where everyone is seen, valued, and embraced.

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CONGREGATION EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

KEEPING UP WITH UNION

Men's Night Out

**EVERY FOURTH
TUESDAY!**



It's never a dull moment at Men's Night Out! From unique Middle Eastern delights to classic American staples, the food is nearly as good as the fellowship when the men at Union Lutheran get together. Pastor Del's Bible study is always certain to drum up interesting conversations, and between the laughs and constant flow of new and interesting topics, I can't imagine being anywhere else. Keep an eye on our socials and worship announcements for the next meeting location. For questions, email Pastor Del at pastordel@unionlutheran.org.

Wonderfully Wise Women's Social Group

The first Wonderfully Wise Women's Social Group get-together kicked off with great success! Their Friday evening potluck saw over a dozen attendees ready to share both delicious homemade dishes and thoughtful donations towards this month's chosen cause—teachers in our local schools. Laughs were shared, conversations flowed, and preparations are already being made for the next meeting. Keep an eye on our socials and worship announcements for updates! For questions, find Warkenda during worship or email Pastor Del at pastordel@unionlutheran.org.





THIRD FRIDAY

What better way to spend a Friday evening than by painting with friends? Our Craft Night crew showed off their creativity, painting decorative rocks of all themes; from glimmering metallics to bright red strawberries, no two rocks were identical, but all demonstrated the unique abilities of their creators. When life gets busy and the days feel long, there's nothing better than settling into a relaxing moment of creativity and conversation. Keep an eye on our socials and worship announcements for updates on future themes. For questions, find Sue during worship or email Pastor Joel at pastorfolkemer@gmail.com.



Craft Night

**EVERY THIRD
FRIDAY!**

MLK Jr. Street Dedication

What an honor it was see members of our council and Union Lutheran community representing our congregation at the MLK Jr. Street Sign Dedication right here in York City. Held 63 years following the historic March on Washington, and the 63rd anniversary of Dr. King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech, our community members participated in a march to the dedication site at Penn Park with a sign unveiling at the intersection of West College Avenue and South Beaver Street. Complete with a quote reading by Pastor Joel, it was a dedication apt for the occasion.



COMMUNITY
EVENT HIGHLIGHT

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



ARTICLE WRITTEN
BY VICTOR SALVO

When considering where to turn for a National Night Out celebration in York City, Union Lutheran is regularly top of the list. Each year, our congregation and York City neighbors come together for an evening of fun, entertainment, food, and community; it's not only an opportunity to open our doors to familiar faces, but to extend a hand and a welcoming smile to new friends in our community.

This year, alongside the many community organizations who came to share their skills and expertise, we were proud to have something truly special: The York City Fire Department and their fire simulator trailer. Firefighters Six and Snell were more than happy to share the ins and outs of the food-truck-sized space. "The main thing is that this fire safety training trailer is a way for people to learn fire safety tips...without actually

having to worry about any sort of real danger,” says Firefighter Six. Kitted out with a variety of in-home appliances, the fire simulator reminds guests of not only spaces where fires break out, but the culprits, too. Once the scene is set, Firefighter Six flips a valve, filling the space with smoke in a matter of seconds; standing inside, it’s easy to imagine how the thick clouds may appear in a kitchen, or a bedroom.

Once the space is thoroughly covered in smoke, they demonstrate the importance of a closed door in the face of a fire before flipping on an exhaust fan and clearing the room. “Sometimes,” Firefighter Six says, “we’ll dress up in our turnout

IF YOU SEE SOMEBODY THAT’S DRESSED IN THEIR TURNOUT GEAR...DON’T BE AFRAID, WE’RE HERE TO HELP

gear and we’ll teach kids, you know, if you see somebody that’s dressed in their turnout gear...don’t be afraid, we’re here to help.” As the night goes on, gasps and murmurs of awe can be heard from guests and families alike as they revisit the fire-safety training of their youth.

Beyond the heat of the fire simulator, National Night Out rages on. In a sea of hotdogs and snowcones, guests nod their heads and tap their feet to the music coming from the DJ table. Inside, free books are given to our community members while outside, children squeal with delight from bouncehouses and basketball hoops.



Some try their hands at carnival-style games and crafts; others tap and smack and bang their way through bongos and boomwhackers galore, adding a joyful percussion to the scene. All is rounded off with a spectacular performance from York Linedance, complete with a valiant effort from Pastor Joel to match their skilled steps.

“National Night Out...started at Union before I got here twelve years ago,” says Pastor Joel. “...We get lots of volunteers who aren’t necessarily part of the congregation officially, but have been part of our work here...to continue to be that neighborhood church, to show the community the love of Christ, and to do our best to include everybody.” As we say goodbye to this year’s National Night Out celebration, we look forward to all that next year’s will bring; from our neighbors to our volunteers, National Night Out unites us and reminds us of our connection to one-another.

UNION LUTHERAN AT CAMP KIRCHENWALD



Join us for fellowship, learning, worship, good food, and fun at Camp Kirchenwald. This one-day retreat is a wonderful opportunity for connection and growth as a congregation

Morning Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
9:00	Arrival and breakfast: Bagels, fruit, yoghurt, coffee & tea
9:30	Opening prayer service
10:00	Team building session 1: Led by Pastor Joel
11:30	Free time

Afternoon Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
12:00	Lunch: Vegan & gluten-free chili, chicken corn noodle soup, salad, bread & cookies
1:00	Team Building Session 2
2:00	Optional activities or free time
4:30	Worship
5:00	Dinner: Hot dogs, potato salad, chips & brownies

Scan the QR code above for the sign-up sheet!

KEEPING UP WITH THE ELCA

THE LATEST HEADLINES AND ARTICLES FROM THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



America at 250: Holding Gratitude and Humility

As we look toward the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, many of us will celebrate with fireworks, parades and barbecues. Independence Day often brings us together with family and friends. Yet there is more that connects us than our communal celebrations. We are also connected through a common vision.



Signed in 1776, the Declaration of Independence proclaims a vision of equality for all people.

Bishop Curry Statement on SCOTUS Immigration Decisions



Recently, the Supreme Court issued a decision that will allow this administration to proceed with terminating Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for more than 330,000 people from Haiti and 3,800 from Syria, many of whom have lived in this country for decades. They are not strangers. They are part of the fabric of our whole society. The termination of TPS threatens to separate families, destabilize local economies and force people to return to countries where they may face severe humanitarian crises, violence and threats to their very lives.

Choosing Reconciliation Over Division in a Multifaith America

From its earliest days, the United States has been shaped by religious diversity. Indigenous peoples sustained diverse spiritual and religious traditions long before the nation's founding, and successive waves of settlers, including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and others, brought a variety of beliefs that helped define the nation's unique and vital religious landscape.

Throughout the church today, many are struggling with debates regarding the religious identity of our nation.



“God is calling us to do more”: An interview with Author David Beckmann



An ELCA pastor, economist, activist and World Food Prize laureate, David Beckmann has spent his varied career working to end poverty and hunger. Though there has been dramatic progress against global poverty in recent decades, Beckmann is clear-eyed about the reasons why that progress may be stalling today and what is needed to strengthen it once more.

Introducing

breeze

**Keeping our congregation connected
through personalized accounts,
events, giving, and much more—all in
one easy-to-use platform**

**Check your email for an invites
and updates from Pastor Joel**



**Click here for a
Breeze tutorial video**



**Start
using
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app**



KEEPING UP WITH THE LSS

THE LATEST HEADLINES AND ARTICLES
FROM THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD



See the 2026 Editions of W.E. News: The E-Newsletter of the LSS

Copy the QR code to see the 2026 backlog of W.E. News before signing up for their newsletter. Chock-full of progressive family-friendly, worship-oriented articles, the W.E. newsletter keeps you up-to-date on all things locally Lutheran, ECLA, community events, and more.



Creating Practical Council Leadership Guides



Our next quarterly Congregation Council members gathering will be held on September 23, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. We will explore a simple framework for creating a practical Council Leadership Guide that supports both current and future council members which includes clear expectations, intentional onboarding, and organized resources to make leadership transitions smoother and help councils spend more time focusing on ministry.

The Hanover Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet in Concert

THE HANOVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BRASS QUINTET will perform for the Fine Arts at First Concert Series at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 21 S. Bedford St., Carlisle on Sunday, September 20 at 3 P.M. Featuring the principal players of the four brass instruments in the orchestra, the Brass Quintet performers are Larry Kuntz (HSO's music director), trumpet; Laura Sterner, trumpet; William Smith, French horn; Shaine Lepley, trombone; and Joe Mummert, tuba...The concert is a benefit for the Central PA Food Bank founded in 1982 and dedicated to ending hunger in Central Pennsylvania. The organization will receive 100% of the proceeds donated at the concert.



Rizzetta's Tones – A Celtic Americana Band



Join us for this FREE "musical journey across the pond" as we begin our 2026-27 Fine Arts concert series by welcoming Rizzetta's Tones.

This Celtic Americana band is comprised of two hammer dulcimers, silver flute, high and low whistles, guitar, plus alto and bass melodions. They often spice up their sound with button accordion, Greek bouzouki, mandolin, autoharp, ukulele, as well as bodhran, djembe, and other percussion instruments and perform with around 15+ instruments on stage.

WELCOMES AND THANK-YOUS

WELCOME, KEVIN!



We welcome Kevin as our newest Union family member! Kevin's shared that he's felt so welcomed by our congregation and is happy to call himself a member.

If you see Kevin, make sure to say hello!

THANK YOU, SCOTT!

A special thank you to our guest musician Scott Heller and his cigar box guitar music. It's always a pleasure to welcome Scott each year to share his musical offerings with our congregation, and the opportunity to hear some of our Union family share their musical talents alongside him.



**S
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P**



THE PASTOR

Do you have a burning question about scripture or faith that you're dying to have answered? Well, now's your chance! By scanning the QR code on the page, you'll be taken to a form where you can submit a faith/scripture-based question for Pastor Joel to answer. If your question's selected, he'll respond in a written article appearing in our next issue.

Each submission may contain one well-thought question, and said question must be faith or scripture-based in some capacity. Please only submit to the form once per issue.

Example Questions:

- How do biblical texts apply to modern society?
- Is cussing a sin?
- Can Christians see "secular" therapists?
- Can God forgive me?

STUMP THE PASTOR

A RESPONSE FROM PASTOR JOEL

Question: Where are all the modern miracles? There's miracle after miracle in the Bible. Are miracles gone or are we blind to them?

Welcome everyone to the inaugural Stump the Pastor response. I am grateful for this edition's question. It truly is one that I'm sure many of us think about, but maybe we're unsure how to ask it. My editor-in-chief...VICTOR...demands that I keep the response to 250 words or less (more or less a suggestion)...but don't worry...I'm not counting this intro! Take that, VICTOR!

Miracles in scripture and miracles in the world around us are deep and tricky subjects. It's not easy to answer fully in 250 words or less, so please, if the response seems blunt, or doesn't entirely cover the question asked, I'm happy to talk more about it.

The question states that miracles seem to happen all the time in the Bible. This is true. We read about several miracles in scripture, but what's often harder to pick up is the timeline and amount of time and space between these actions. We also can run into the reality that we combine all of the stories we know as one when the different gospels and epistles in scripture don't mention all of them.



Another element of the miracles in scripture is to ask why they exist. Jesus doesn't feed every hungry person in the world or cure every sick person in the world. Jesus tells us that he performs miracles to show the love and power of God and to show us who he is as the son of God. Jesus' purpose is much larger than miracles, but miracles are a byproduct of who he is.

Miracles are still a byproduct of who Jesus is and who we are as part of the body of Christ. The biggest miracle is that we receive the Holy Spirit, that we are saved by Christ by his work and not our own, and that we are each given gifts and abilities to love, serve, and care for each other and the world around us.



To bluntly answer the first and third part of the question: No, miracles are not gone. Sometimes, they're obvious; other times, they're not as easy to see. Part of the struggle to see them is that the Holy Spirit inspires us to do things we otherwise wouldn't do.

The Holy Spirit leads us to do the Gospel work of loving God and loving and serving our neighbors; we're given gifts, talents, resources, and abilities to invent surgeries and medicines so that things like appendicitis aren't an automatic death sentence—that people flock to a disaster zone to help with clean up or sending money and resources for those who now have nothing.

Most of Jesus' miracles included the reality that following the miracle, the recipient was put into a right relationship with the community and welcomed back as a full member of the community. Jesus broke down human barriers to bring people together, and one of the best miracles the Spirit performs in us now is to continue that work of breaking down barriers and building beloved community.

ADVOCACY ALERTS

**THE LATEST HEADLINES AND ARTICLES
FROM LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN
PENNSYLVANIA AND ELCA ADVOCACY**

LAMPa Alerts

- Support PA's Investment in Feeding the Hungry
- Support Data Center Moratorium, Thoughtful Regulation
- Protect Marriage Equality in PA
- Tell Gov. Shapiro to Stand for Welcome of Immigrants
- Give Pennsylvanians a Clean Slate for Housing
- Protect Against LGBTQ+ Discrimination in PA



ELCA Alerts

- Take Action to Support Survivors and End Human Trafficking
- Support Essential Hunger and Agriculture Funding
- Support the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools Act
- Reject Voting Barriers and Oppose the SAVE Act



A UNION FAREWELL

AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR SECRETARY SELENA JOHNSON ON HER RETIREMENT

- **How long have you been working at Union Lutheran?**
 - I've been with Union for seven years.
- **What's something you've loved about working for this congregation?**
 - I love the fact that Union is a community church. That's how I found out about Union. They were having a Juneteenth event and my first thought was about a white church celebrating Juneteenth. Then I saw there was a need for volunteers in the clothing room, so I volunteered. Not long after that there was an ad for a secretary; I applied and was hired.



PHOTOGRAPH OF SELENA JOHNSON

- **What's an experience you've had while working here that you'll never forget—one that sticks out in your mind?**
 - Covid sticks out. We took the time to open the doors for people who didn't have anywhere to go.
- **What are you most looking forward to in retirement?**
 - I am looking forward to becoming a housewife. I am newly married, I have a new home, and I'm looking forward to decorating.
- **How about any parting words of wisdom?**
 - As far as the wisdom, if it's not gonna kill you, don't stress about it.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

"Caught Up in the Timeless Magic"

Linda Amos

*She stood there immersed
In the quiet tranquility
Of a perfect Autumn afternoon.*

*Once the traffic slowed,
She strode out onto the median
That divided the busy avenue in front of her home.*

*Leaves of gold, umber, and red
Drifted soundlessly from their trees
Announcing Autumn's magical reverie.*

*She bent down and placed her purse
And her ever-present raincoat on the ground.
Then she stood up, threw back her arms, and fell*

*Backwards onto the biggest, fattest, highest pile
Of Autumn leaves she had ever raked together.
A smile spread slowly across her face.*

*Cars drove by at their hurried pace,
Delivery trucks ran up and down the avenue,
And even a city bus rushed past her.*

*She lay there smiling and thought to herself,
"You are never too old, too mature, or too
grown up
To not play in a big pile of Autumn leaves!"*

*Some may call it childish,
To be caught up in the timeless magic
Of Autumn's fluttering leaves.*

She continued to disagree!



Support **Union Lutheran** through Community Aid

now with an
updated donation
list

Starting July 1st, Community Aid will
now accept household items,
electronics, toys, and more!

Use the donation code on the back during
drop off at any Community Aid and Union
will receive a partnership credit

Help support our community

Flip for
guidelines



Donation Guidelines

Donation code:
20165

Electronics

COMPUTER MONITORS	FLAT PANELS TVS
COMPUTER ACCESSORIES	RADIOS
VCR & DVD PLAYERS	ALARM CLOCKS
SMALL KITCHEN APPLIANCES	

Toys

PLASTIC TOYS
GAMES
DOLLS
PUZZLES
TOY CARS

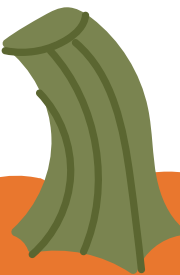
Household Items

POTS/PANS	PET ITEMS
DISHES/STONEWARE	LAMPS
GLASSWARE	SHELVES

SCAN THE QR
CODE FOR AN
EXPANDED
DONATION LIST



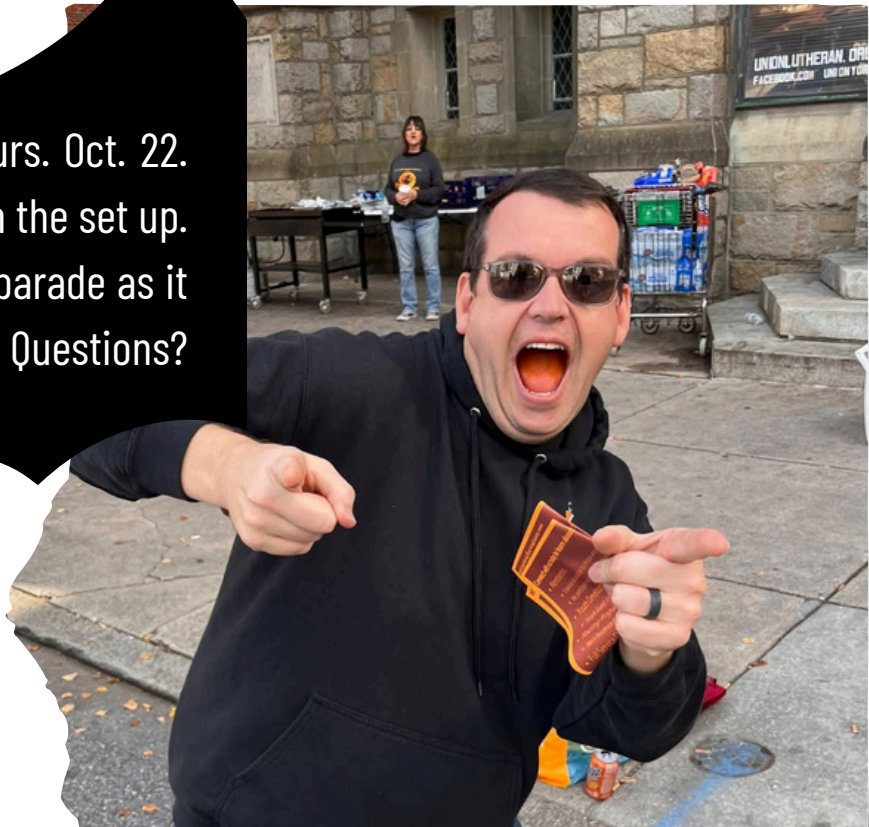
HALLOWEEN 76 YEARS OF COMMUNITY FUN PARADE



Join us as we raise money to fight poverty. We are requesting that members donate prepackaged deserts (homemade deserts are welcomed in baggies), crackers, candy items, water bottles, & sodas.

Please have your donation here by Thurs. Oct. 22. Following worship on the 25th we'll begin the set up. Stick around to help sell and enjoy the parade as it passes by the front of the church. Questions? Contact the office (717) 843-7897

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(717) 843-7897**



NEWS AND NOTICES

UPCOMING EVENTS

O C T O B E R

Community Breakfast	Union West Campus	10 th
Craft Night	Union West Campus	16 th
Congregation Retreat	Camp Kirchenwald	24 th
Halloween Parade	Union West Campus	25 th
Men's Night Out	T.B.D.	27 th
Community Breakfast	Union West Campus	31 st
Wonderfully Wise Women	T.B.D.	T.B.D.

N O V E M B E R

Community Breakfast	Union West Campus	14 th
Craft Night	Union West Campus	20 th
Men's Night Out	T.B.D.	24 th
21 Turkey Salute	Union West Campus	25 th
First Sunday of Advent	Union West Campus	29 st
Wonderfully Wise Women	T.B.D.	T.B.D.



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