

† The Rod and the Staff †

A monthly publication of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Whitehall (Egypt), Pennsylvania

† July/ August, 2025 †

Vol. 2025 Issue 4

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PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

"What a wonderful way to start the day!"

These words were said to me by one of the individuals who attended a Morning Prayer service on Thursday morning at 9:30 AM. The person felt it gave her an opportunity to Worship God before doing all the chores for the day.

Come and join us each Thursday at 9:30 AM in our beautiful sanctuary as we start the day in prayer. Come and join us and start your day in worship.

Starting in August, come and gather in the sanctuary of our Lord in the silence of God's House in prayer.

In Christ's Love,

Rev. James W. Schlegel
Pastor

2025 NE Synod Assembly

By Carl France

The 38th NEPA Synod Assembly was held May 30-31 at Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church in Stroudsburg. Pastor James Schlegel and Carl France were in attendance.

This year's assemblage kicked off with uplifting music by the Abiding Hope Band, followed by Bishop Christopher deForest's welcome, introductions, announcements and opening prayers.

Our Global Connections program commenced with a warm greeting from Bishop Tobias Bilz of Saxony, Germany. He spoke of our exchange partnership as he introduced three pastors from their Synod, Council of the Mission Districts. Gifts of Thanksgiving were exchanged with our overseas associates. The Executive Associate to the Bishop, Rev. Rachael Dietz introduced nominations and elections for Synod Council. Rev. Dietz was escorted on stage by Chipotle, a well-mannered black Labrador service dog.

Jen Bradbury, of Fuller Youth Institute and Senior Director of Family Ministry at First Elyn Presbyterian Church in Glen Elyn, IL, was the keynote speaker. Jen opened with, "Does your church prioritize young people? Growing young people is more than a strategy!" The Institute surveyed 259 churches and visited 12 churches that have excelled with young people to further research what sets them apart from the rest.

As Jen shared what the 12 churches' youth groups were doing, I thought of how our youth group is already doing everything she mentioned. A question posed by Pastor Schlegel caused me to think of our youth group. Under Lisa Kroboth's devoted, diligent, insightful leadership and Drew Null's past help and ceaseless efforts, we are following and exceeding Jen's suggestions.

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***This issue of The Rod and the Staff is given in honor of all of God's blessings
by Michael and Karen Haberern.***

***This issue of The Rod and the Staff is given in honor of our grandchildren,
Hudson and Charlotte. Love, Gigi and Pappy Weiss.***



Cont'd from page 1, **2025 Synod Assembly**

Our youth group also receives Pastor Schlegel's support, guidance and direction.

Our youth group has volunteered and interacted with the residents of Phoebe and Cedarbrook Nursing Homes. Jen's recommendation to empower young people is accomplished with our annual Youth Sunday. Another of Jen's ideas is youth involvement with the community, which our youth accomplish during trick or treat with the Miracle League, the 5K race for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and their volunteer work with Parkland Cares Food Pantry.

Fun activities like miniature golf, ax throwing and Phantoms hockey games allow our youth to share time as friends.

Jen concluded the session by remarking, "Everyone rises when we focus on our youth".

Bishop deForest's report was reviewed at length, detailing challenges faced by churches. The Bishop wants to make it possible for every congregation in the Synod to be lead by a pastor, deacon or a licensed minister. Bishop deForest exhorted those in attendance to "Empower and encourage the roles of all believers in the NEPA Synod".

Dinner was followed by worship and a reception.

Saturday's Plenary sessions opened with music by the Abiding Hope Band, followed by greetings, announcements and prayer by Bishop deForest. Pastor Doug Hill of Littleton, CO spoke about contemplative action and the use of visualization in prayer. This is accomplished by closing your eyes and visualizing those for whom you are praying while mentally picturing your intentions. Pastor Hill shared that people he has prayed for have, on some occasions, unexpectedly called him. The dynamic Pastor Hill was the best speaker of this year's assembly.

A review of the nominations and elections to Council was succeeded by Synod Treasurer Donald Boyer's report.

Keynote speaker Jen Bradbury covered this year's theme, *Connect the Dots*. She discussed a faith journey in three directions: love like Jesus, heal like Jesus and engage like Jesus. During the June 1st sermon, Pastor Schlegel focused on the *Connect the Dots* theme.

This year's program concluded with a presentation of the 2026 budget and sending worship.



A. Betty Ackerman, Janice Abelovsky

B. Carletta Bartholomew, Michelle Beck, Bill Beidleman, Rosalie Beidleman, Kayla Belzecky, Jacob Braid, Marianne Blocker, Bonnie Brown, Janice Buckwalter, Carol Bennecoff, Ann Borell, Alana Bird, Angela Bressler, Sandra Bressler, Pat Budd, Mark Buresh, Ronald Burkhart

C. Lisa Carl, Charles Church, Nick Cihylik, JoAnn Coppola

D. Nancy Dietz, Pierre DeRagon, Donna Detweiler, Kelly Durst

E. Kimberly Eastep

F. Beverly Fekula, Gloria Fischl, Donald Fister, Diane Flahart, Annie Frack, Carl France, Kay Fronheiser, Patrick Foran, Paul Frack

G. Maxine Gantz, Ronald Gerlach, Teri Gerney, Sally Gibson, Jeff and Carol Gilbert, Rebecca Gross

H. Shelley Hanson, Mike Hart, Dot Hartman, Brandon Heichel, Al Herman, Betty and Lamont Hontz, Barbara Horvath, Elsie Huber, Susan Huber

K. Alex Katana, Bill Kiefer, Scott Knauss, Kathy Koch, Gerald Koenig, John Kotze, Keith Kramer, Barbara Kuhns, Zoe Kuchera, Adele Kunkle, Bruce Kunkle

L. Scott Lazarus, Wayne Lazarus, Baby Lily

M. Heather Markulics, Diane Masonheimer, Mia McCleary, Denise Mensinger, Debbie Messinger, Carole Mickley, Doris Miller, Richard Miller, Christopher Moakley, Mason Moriarty, Tara Morrow, Tiffany Mosser, Kevin Moyer, Russell Myers,

N. Cathy Nelcoski, Ava Nolan, Aiyana Nederostek

O. Russlene Ouldcott

P. Barbara Pearlman, Mary Peters, Sandra Phillips, Karen Plesher

Q. Linda Quinn

R. Scarlet Randolph, Barbara Rapchak, Corey Rapchak, June Reifinger, Reynold Reifinger, Jean Reinert, Aida Reinhard, Debbie Reinhard, Jan Reinik, Wayne Remaly, Dee Renner, Austin Roth, Tonie Rothdeutsch, Mary Royer, Carolyn Ruch

S. Ruth Saadi, Johnny Sabo, Michael Saraceno, Nancy Scheidt, Irene Scherr, Gloria Schmidinger, Bonnie Schneck, Michael Schwentner, Corey Seese, Helen Sefcik, June Sell, Jim Shope, Carol Siegel, Sue Sill, Sean Skelonis, Denise Smith, Leroy Smith, Sherry Smith, Richard Sniscak, Fran Sniscak, Grace Smith, Helene Sterner, Donna Strawbridge, John Strawbridge

T. Rosemarie Thrash, Susan Trumbauer

U. Paul Unger

W. Bill Weighknecht, Jennifer Wentling, Jim Wick

Z. Mary Zader, Bob Zarizski

The Families of

Beth Cherry and Daniel Yakubeczek

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

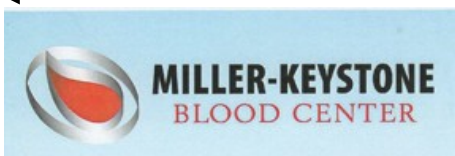
On April 27, we hosted our **Penny Party**. We had 62 people in attendance and made a profit of \$2,963.07! Thank you to everyone who donated food, money or items for the game. And a special thank you to those who came to play! We hope you had a great time!

On May 18, 4 youth members came to help **build and create decorations for our True North VBS** program. They made flowers, trees and an assortment of others items and we can't wait to see them all over the church during VBS!

On June 9, 4 youth members helped to **plant geraniums**. With the youth, parents and other congregation members helping, it went very quickly. We hope the flowers bloom soon to get some beautiful colors around the church.

Our clothing drive ended on June 14. Thank you to everyone who donated and especially to everyone who helped us empty the room and load the truck. It was wet and heavy work, but we got it all done. We collected **6,421 pounds** and we made a profit of **\$1,284.20!**

Thank you for your support of the youth group. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a supportive and generous congregation!!



BLOOD DRIVE 9 AM—2 PM JULY 2

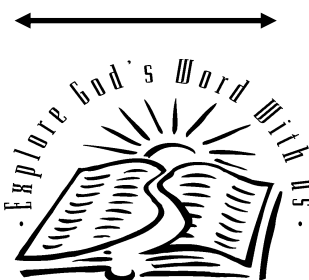
If you made an appointment, thank you.



Egypt Park Church Service & Picnic 10:15 AM July 27



SUNDAY, AUGUST 31 9 AM



Come and join us in September as we restart our **Bible Study** programs.

Monday, September 8th 10 AM
Wednesday, September 10th at 10 AM

Weekly **Morning Prayer** will resume:

Thursday, August 7th at 9:30 AM

Place the dates in your calendar
and come and join us.



The service will be outside. Please bring a lawn chair. In case of inclement weather, the service will be held in Fellowship Hall.

September 7, 9 AM

YARD CARE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Doesn't it feel good when you come to church on a Sunday and the church grounds look beautiful. Your help is needed. Sign for a two-week period to keep the church flowers beds, walkways and perimeter free from weeds as well as deadhead the geraniums. You choose the day and time you work during the two-week period you volunteer. Please sign up outside the church office.

**SOTHLHC Signs of Our Faithfulness**

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"

End of Prior Month (as of May 31, 2025)

Monthly Stewardship Income: \$12,850

YTD: \$89,092

Monthly Operating Expenses: \$24,743

YTD: \$91,772

Stewardship Income includes Benevolence Envelopes:

May: \$398

YTD: \$1,795 (Budget for 2025—\$19,399)

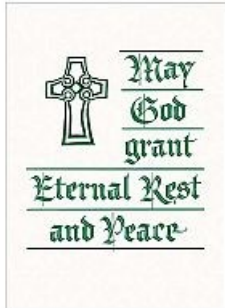
YTD: Paid \$4,850

April Electric: \$630

YTD: \$6,254

Capital Campaign Balance: \$75,069 Pledge: \$34,950

The monthly Treasurer's Report is available at the top of the stairs.



Daniel J. Yakubeczek entered into eternal rest on June 4, 2025. We commend Daniel into the hands of Almighty God. We offer our sincere sympathy to his family.

The July Times News Advertising is sponsored in honor of my granddaughter Abby's birthday by Rozelle Higgins.

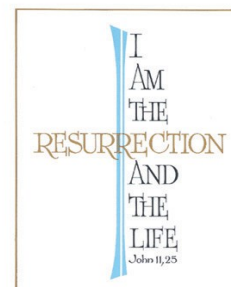
The August Times News Advertising is sponsored in honor of Ian Bordenick's Confirmation and with God's blessings by Carol and Paul Balascki.



**CHURCH COUNCIL
SUMMER MEETING
AUGUST 6, 7:00 PM**

**2025 CONGREGATION
COUNCIL**

President:	Tracy Tacker
Vice President:	Jan Masonheimer
Secretary:	Melissa Sassaman
Treasurer:	Drew Null
Financial Secretary:	Carl France
Learning Deacon:	Tara Henry-Morrow
Service Deacon:	Barry Wexler
Support Deacon:	Gary Easton
Youth Deacon:	Lisa Kroboth
Worship Deacon:	Denise Smith
Witness Deacon:	Mary Lou Young
Youth Representative:	Dylan Rapchak
Rev. James W. Schlegel,	Pastor





- ✿ Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges memorial donations given **in memory of Verna M. Chandick** by:
John and Rita Bendekovits, Phyllis and Barry Brader, Peter Chandick, Chris and Ron Derhammer, Denise and Edward Hozza, Lorie Koch, Kathleen Kropf, Michael and Jane Krupa, Aaron and Joan Miller, Brian Molchany, Pete Rusyn and family, Doris Snyder, Edward and Jane Tretiak, and John and Jane Weber.
- ✿ Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges a memorial donation given **in memory of Daniel J. Yakubecek** by :
Robin Yakubecek Hines, Jan and Diane Masonheimer, and Jay H. Gilbert and family.
- ✿ **To everyone who helped maintain our garden beds** by planting marigolds and geraniums (with prayer they may bloom sometime this summer) and by pulling weeds and deadheading the flowers.
- ✿ **To everyone who helped prepare for VBS** by creating amazing decorations and props.
- ✿ **To Norma A. Hrozencik** for donating her May Thrivent Choice Dollars to SOTHLC and for designing beautiful bulletin board displays.
- ✿ **From Robyn Yakubecek Hines:** *Dear Pastor Schlegel, Thank you for being such a devoted pastor to both my mother and father over the years. You made yourself available whenever there was a need or hospital visit asked of you. I always smiled when my dad mentioned that you stopped by to give him communion. I am so appreciative of your commitment to our family.*
- ✿ **From Debbie Messinger:** *I would like to thank everyone for their prayers. Special thanks to Pastor Schlegel for his visits and for giving communion. Thank you for caring.*
- ✿ **From Bonnie Schneck:** *Dear Pastor Schlegel and Congregation, Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your prayers during my recovery from my car accident. Words cannot express my appreciation.*
- ✿ **From Amy Mietelski of Northeast PA Synod:** *Thank you for your generous gift of \$9,220 towards Mission Support. I love serving on Synod Council because I get to see lives transformed through the work we do! God bless your mission at Shepherd of the Hills as you love, heal and engage like Jesus!*
- ✿ **From Shari Noctor of Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative:** *Thank you for your continued support of the WCHI. It is because of generous donors like you that make it possible for WCHI to serve so many Whitehall and Coplay food insecure residents.*
- ✿ **From Scott Knauss:** *Thank you so much for all the prayers and the beautiful prayer shawl. A special thank you to Pastor Schlegel for his prayers and visits. All these things aided me in my recovery. May you all be blessed by the One who makes all things possible. I will be forever grateful to everyone at Shepherd of the Hills.*



Alivia Deemer graduated from Freedom High School. She will be attending Lafayette College.

Megan Ferenchak graduated from Northampton High School. She will be attending Lebanon Valley College.

Jasckon Lesinski graduated from Quakertown Community High School. He will be attending Bucks County Community College.

Alexis Shells graduated from Whitehall High School.

Paige Tacker graduated from Whitehall High School. She will be attending St. Joseph's University.

Briana Baer graduated from West Chester University.

Megan Hutter graduated from James Madison University.

Kayleigh Moyer graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Tim Ritter graduated from West Chester University.

Jennifer Ritter graduated from St. Joseph's University.

Hunter Weiss graduated from Moravian University.



On April 27, 2025, we welcomed **Betty Remaly** into our church family at Shepherd of the Hills.

On April 27, 2025, we welcomed **Ben Hudak and Kate Musselman** into our church family at Shepherd of the Hills.

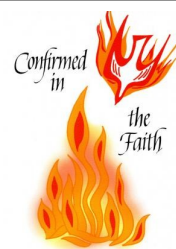
We wish Betty, Ben and Kate God's many blessings.



On April 27, 2025, we welcomed **Audrey Diane Molchany** into our church family by the Sacrament of Baptism.

We wish God's many blessings on Audrey, her parents, Jacob and Jennifer and her sponsors, Courtney Hughes and Jay Balliet.

On June 8, 2025 we joined in celebration with **Ian James Bordenick** who affirmed his baptism.



On May 9, 2025, **Alexa Deemer and Peter Conzola** were united as one. We wish Peter and Alexa God's many blessings as they continue their lives as husband and wife.

On May 10, 2025, **Kyle Andrew Walton and Brittney May Smolick** were united as one. We wish Kyle and Brittney God's many blessings as they continue their lives as husband and wife.



The SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church are recognized for their year of faithful dedication to the youth of our church. The efforts of these individuals helps to insure the future of our church.

Thank you to our teachers:

Lisa Kroboth

Brenda Benner

Tara Henry-Morrow

Carla Myers

Paige Tacker

Tracy Tacker

Hunter Weiss

Kay Weiss



No experience necessary. All lessons and guides are provided. All you need is a willingness to share God's love with our children. See Lisa Kroboth if you are interested.



COMMITTEE Update

THE SERVICE TEAM

We are collecting funds to help our own members of Shepherd of the Hills who may temporarily find themselves in need of assistance. **"Assistance Fund"** envelopes are in the narthex for your contributions to this worthwhile fund.

Our church supports the **Whitehall Copley Hunger Initiative**. Current needs include:

- ⇒ Soups: chicken noodle
- ⇒ Cereals: all kinds, and any other breakfast items
- ⇒ Pasta: macaroni and cheese
- ⇒ Canned fruit
- ⇒ Canned kidney beans

Please reach out in God's love to those in need. *God's Work, Our Hands*. Please place your donations on the table in the narthex.

THE WITNESS COMMITTEE

The church has an e-mail. Our e-mail address is pastor@sothlc-egypt.org. Each day there will be a devotion of scripture and prayer sent from the church via e-mail. If you have access to e-mail and would like to receive the weekly devotion, please e-mail us your request with your address.

FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

at Shepherd of the Hills
TUESDAY, July 15, 4-6 PM

MEAL IS OPEN TO EVERYONE

We are looking for volunteers to provide
desserts for the Community Meal.



WORSHIP in the PARK



July 27, 10:15 AM under the pavilion at Egypt Community Park.

The service will be followed by our picnic.

The church will provide the hot dogs. Please bring a salad, dessert or casserole to share. **REMEMBER** to bring chairs, plates, utensils and something to drink.