

† The Rod and the Staff †

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

† July/ August, 2026 †

Vol. 2026 Issue 4

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

39th Annual NE Synod Assembly **By Carl France**

On Friday, June 5th, I accompanied Pastor Schlegel to the 2026 Northeastern PA Synod, ELCA Assembly held at Split Rock Resort on Lake Harmony in the beautiful Pocono Mountains. Plenary Session Two was opened by our Synod Bishop Christopher deForest with introductions and words of welcome. Pastor Deb Staniszewski introduced us to deep breathing exercises to better relax and enjoy life. This included being thankful for our many blessings. Prayer blessings were given by Jon Richardson.

The much respected Secretary of the ELCA, Pastor Ce Ce Mills, conducted the voting for the election of our Synod Council and for a new Bishop. The Synod Bishop position is an elected office with a six year term. The first ballot had been held the previous evening. There were over twenty nominees for the second ballot. Election results were reviewed by Pastor Mills. This vote narrowed the ballot to seven nominees.

Dr. Donald Boyer gave the *Report of the Treasurer* and presented the 2027 budget. Bottom line— our synod expenses were well under what was budgeted for 2025. 2027 compensation guidelines were briefly reviewed. Dr. Boyer spoke of how our donations raised for world hunger are helping people to survive. One example was the devastating wildfires in Hawaii. Lutheran missions were able to provide survivors with fresh produce and meat during this crisis. He thanked the Synod Staff and Finance Committee for all their time and efforts, noting that they worked more hours than any other committee.

Cont'd page 2



This issue of The Rod and the Staff is given in honor of my granddaughter Abby's birthday by Rozelle Higgins.

This issue of The Rod and the Staff is given in honor of our 35th wedding anniversary by Mike and Joy Schwentner.



Cont'd from page 1, **39th Annual Synod Assembly**

Bishop deForest led our assembly in prayer as we commenced a "Worship Service of Healing". The Reverend Dr. R. Guy Erwin, who serves as President of United Lutheran Seminary, was introduced by our Bishop. Dr. Erwin then began the worship service.

After a lunch break, Plenary Session Three opened with remarks from Bishop deForrest. He spoke of imagining a future grounded in faith. This year's Assembly theme, *Imagine*, is grounded in apostle Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21, "Then comes the Word that stretches our imagination to its limits... to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine..."

ELCA Secretary, Pastor Ce Ce Mills introduced the seven remaining nominees for the Bishop position. Each candidate appeared on the stage separately with three minutes to address the Synod Assembly audience. This was followed by 15-minute breakout sessions with each of the nominees.

A prayer was held prior to the dinner break. Plenary Session Four followed with the third ballot for our new Bishop. After voting, the field of nominees was narrowed to four candidates. On Saturday, June 6th, Plenary Session Five included a nominee question and answer period. A fourth ballot for Bishop followed. This again narrowed the field to two nominees.

During Plenary Session Six, another nominee question and answer period was held. After the fifth ballot, Pastor Jennifer Dee was elected as our Synod's first female Bishop. Pastor Dee comes to us from Trinity Lutheran Church in Robesonia. No doubt, Pastor Dee made an utmost positive impression on the assembly audience. We wish Pastor Dee every success and the best of luck as our new Bishop.

We also thank Bishop Christopher deForest for his honorable and faithful service. The Bishop is wished the best of success and happiness in his future endeavors.



- A.** Betty Ackerman, John Acuna, John Ammon
- B.** Carletta Bartholomew, Michelle Beck, Bill Beidleman, Rosalie Beidleman, Kayla Belzecky, Jacob Braido, Marianne Blocker, Bonnie Brown, Janice Buckwalter, Carol Bennecoff, Paul Blankenhorn, Ann Borell, Alana Bird, Angela Bressler, Sandra Bressler, Pat Budd, Mark Buresh
- C.** Jim Church, Nick Cihylik, JoAnn Coppola
- D.** Nancy Dietz, Donna Detweiler, Michelle Duffy, Kelly Durst
- E.** Kimberly Eastep, Jamie Elmore
- F.** Beverly Fekula, Gloria Fischl, Donald Fister, Annie Frack, Paul Frack, Kay Fronheiser
- G.** Ronald Gerlach, Teri Gerney, Carol Gilbert, Jason Greiss
- H.** Jason Hacker, Ronald Hacker, Cyndee Hart, Mike Hart, Dot Hartman, Brandon Heichel, Al Herman, Betty Hontz, Barbara Horvath, Elsie Huber
- K.** Jake Kaligis, Alex Katana, John Kotze, Keith Kramer, Barbara Kuhns, Bruce Kunkle
- L.** Carlotta Lambert, Scott Lazarus, Wayne Lazarus, Greg Lewis
- M.** Shirley Mack, Leonard Makovsky, Heather Markulics, Diane Masonheimer, Lucy Messinger, Carole Mickley, Doris Miller, Richard Miller, Christopher Moakley, Al Mosser, Kevin Moyer, Christine Murray, Russell Myers,
- N.** Ava Nolan
- P.** Maryann Paluch, Sandra Phillips
- R.** Scarlet Randolph, Corey Rapchak, June Reifinger, Reynold Reifinger, Jean Reinert, Jan Reinik, Wayne Remaly, Dee Renner, Lorraine Ritter, Austin Roth, Tonie Rothdeutsch, Mary Royer, Carolyn Ruch
- S.** Ruth Saadi, Michael Saraceno, Rick Sarmir, Nancy Scheidt, Irene Scherr, Gloria Schmidinger, Bonnie Schneck, Linda Schock, Michael Schwentner, Corey Seese, Helen Sefcik, June Sell, Sylvia Seregelyes, Wayne Serfass, Jim Shope, Grace Siegel, Sue Sill, Sean Skelonis, Leroy Smith, Sherry Smith, Barbara Stangle, Cindy Steckel, Helene Sterner, John Strawbridge
- T.** Rosemarie Thrash, Susan Trumbauer, Brad Tully
- U.** Paul Unger
- W.** Bill Weighknecht, Diane Weiss, Jennifer Wentling, John Wexler, Jim Wick
- Y.** Baby Ellie Young and parents, Lindsay and Adam

The Family of
Donald, Sr. and Marie Genovese

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

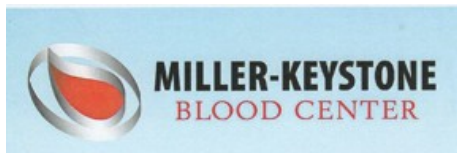
On April 19, we hosted our **Penny Party**. We had 51 people in attendance and made a profit of \$2,105.85! Thank you to everyone who donated food, money or items for the game. And a special thank you to those who came to play! We hope you had a great time!

We spent the afternoon of May 3 at **Angry Jack's Axe Throwing** where 3 youth members tried their hand at throwing axes and knives and competed against each other for the highest scores. They enjoyed pizza for lunch and had a fun time!

On May 26, 1 youth member worked with 5 congregation members to **plant geraniums**. They did a fantastic job in making our landscaping look beautiful.

On May 29, 5 youth members came to help **build and create decorations for our Rainforest Falls VBS program and enjoyed a 7 to 7**. They made flowers, leaves and even more leaves to help transform the church into a rainforest. After we finished, we went bowling at Hampton Lanes, played in the arcade, spent time in the church playing games, climbed Bake Oven Knob and watched the sunrise on a very cold and windy day and finished with breakfast at the Coplay Eatery. It was a long night, but it was a lot of fun!!

Don't forget **the clothing drive will continue through June 2027**. This is for soft goods only!!! Please don't bring anything else besides what is on the list. It will just get thrown away. Please bring any bags of clothing and put them downstairs in the last Sunday School room on the right. Make sure that all shoes are bagged separately. We are collecting new or gently used men, women and children's clothing, shoes, purses, belts, bed and bath linens, and stuffed animals. The clothing that is collected is distributed to local thrift shops and in areas in need of clothing. The clothing will NOT be shredded!!! All clean wearable clothing and shoes are reused by less fortunate people and families. The clothing does not end up in landfills which helps to keep America green and clean. Thank you for your support of the youth group. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a supportive and generous congregation!!



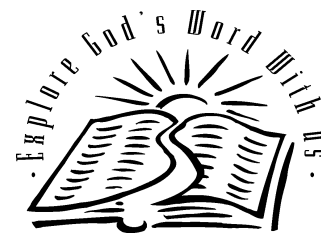
BLOOD DRIVE 9 AM—2 PM JULY 8



Egypt Park Church Service & Picnic 10:15 AM July 26



SUNDAY, AUGUST 30 9 AM



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

Wednesday, September 9th 10 AM
Monday, September 21st at 10 AM

Weekly **Morning Prayer** will resume:

Thursday, August 6th 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 6, 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.



SOTHLC Signs of Our Faithfulness

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

End of Prior Month (as of May 31, 2026)

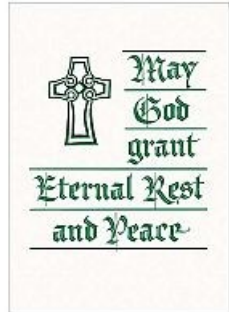
Monthly Stewardship Income: \$14,815 YTD: \$93,528

Monthly Operating Expenses: \$23,092 YTD: \$96,074

Stewardship Income includes Benevolence Envelopes:

May	\$324	YTD: \$1,858 (Budget for 2026—\$19,412) (Sent \$4,853)
April Electric	\$572	YTD: \$7,159

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



Marie E. (Frack) Genovese entered into eternal rest on May 23, 2026. We commend Marie into the hands of Almighty God. We offer our sincere sympathy to her family.

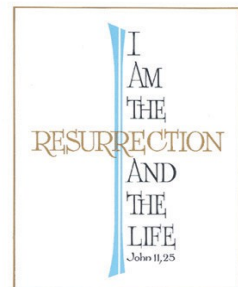
The July Times News Advertising is sponsored in honor of our children and grandchildren by Pastor and Cindy Schlegel.



**CHURCH COUNCIL
SUMMER MEETING
AUGUST 5, 7:00 PM**

**2026 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: | Ian Bordenick |
| Rev. James W. Schlegel, Pastor | |





- ✿ Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges memorial donations given **in memory of Barbara Rapchak** by Patricia Rogers.
- ✿ **To Norma Hrozencik** for directing Thrivent Choice Dollars to SOTHLC in May.
- ✿ **To Donald Gantz, Allen Handwerk, Robert Klock and Lisa Kroboth** for directing Thrivent Choice Dollars to SOTHLC in June.
- ✿ **To everyone who helped maintain our garden beds** by planting geraniums and by pulling weeds and deadheading the flowers.
- ✿ **To the 50th Anniversary Committee:** Glenn Hacker, Randy Marushak, Terri Miller, Marjorie Nelcoski, Frances Worman and Pastor Schlegel. It was a marvelous event commemorating 50 years in our current church building.
- ✿ **To everyone who helped prepare for VBS** by creating amazing decorations and props.
- ✿ **To Norma Hrozencik** for designing beautiful kiosk displays.
- ✿ **To everyone who registered to donate blood** during the July 8th Whitehall Lions/Miller-Keystone Blood Drive.
- ✿ **To everyone involved in planning and preparing for the July 21st Community Meal** at our church.

★ Thank you ★
Veterans

During our **May 24th Memorial Day service**, we recognized all of our church members who served our country in the armed forces.

On **Flag Day, July 14th**, the **Quilts of Valor** organization recognized veterans **Paul Rapchak, Paul Balascki and Robert Tacker** by presenting them with beautiful handmade quilts.





Robert Bordenick graduated from Parkland High School. He will attend Bloomsburg University.

Matthew Grim graduated from East Penn High School.

Madelynn Klinger graduated from Northampton Area High School. She will attend East Stroudsburg University, Early Childhood Education.

Alexander Makovsky will attend New York University.

Mitchell Moyer graduated from Kutztown High School.

Bobby Nelcoski graduated from Timber Creek High School. He will attend the University of Miami, College of Finance.

Cienna Smith graduated from Parkland High School. She will attend Northampton Area Community College, then Penn State.

Steven Hanson graduated from Lehigh Carbon Community College.

Olivia Lesinski graduated from Ursinus College, Environmental Science and Dance.

Aiden Tacker graduated from Bucknell University, Civil Engineering.

Hunter Weiss graduated from Moravian University in 2025. She will pursue a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at University of Georgia.



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On May 10, 2026, **Norma Hrozencik and Charles Church** were united as one. We wish Norma and Charles God’s many blessings as they continue their lives as husband and wife.



On May 23, 2026 **Kate Musselman and Benjamen Hudak** were united as one. We wish Kate and Benjamen God’s many blessings as they continue their lives as husband and wife.



On May 24, 2026 we welcomed **Cali Rose Wescoe** into our church family by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

We wish God’s many blessings on Cali, her parents, Colin and Chelsea and her sponsors, Erin McDonald and Kyle Wescoe.

On June 7, 2026 we joined in celebration with **Kyleigh Rae Greiss** who affirmed her baptism.

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 | Carla Myers |
| Tracy Tacker | Kay Weiss |
| Tara Henry-Morrow | Hunter 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:

- ⇒ Toiletry items: **No longer collecting adult and baby diapers.**
- ⇒ Breakfast items: cereal
- ⇒ Vegetables: canned corn
- ⇒ Starches: spaghetti noodles, 1 lb bags of rice
- ⇒ Miscellaneous: spaghetti sauce (can/plastic jar), condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo)

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 21, 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 26, 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.