

NEW HANOVER HIGHLIGHTS

A Publication of The New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church



Caroling



Advent Social



Christmas Pageant



Clothing Drive

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Come and worship on Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24th

Come and celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on Christmas Eve. The New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church (NHELCH) offers two spiritually enriched, candlelight services at 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM.

4:00 PM

The 4:00 service will feature the traditional live nativity. The Kids for Christ (KFC) and Grace praise bands and Jesus and Me (J.A.M.) choir will participate in this service along with traditional organ music. Be sure to arrive by 3:45 to hear the extended Prelude music.

8:00 PM

For the 8:00 service, participants should plan to arrive before 7:30 to be inspired by a special 30-minute Prelude of beautiful instrumental holiday music. Arrive early to experience a selection of refined, thoughtfully curated instrumental works designed to prepare the heart and mind for the solemn beauty of the evening. From elegant arrangements of traditional carols to serene seasonal pieces, the Prelude will offer a moment of quiet reflection and graceful anticipation. We invite you to enjoy this musical offering as we prepare to welcome Christmas with reverence and joy.

Honoring Pastor Scott

A Grateful Farewell

After seven years of devoted service, Pastor Scott Staub is stepping into a well-earned retirement, leaving behind a legacy of faith, compassion, and unwavering commitment to our congregation. As we reflect on his ministry, we are filled with gratitude for the countless ways he has touched our lives and strengthened our community.

From his very first sermon, Pastor Scott brought warmth, wisdom, and a deep love for God’s word. His messages were not only rooted in scripture but also in the realities of our daily lives—encouraging us, challenging us, and guiding us through seasons of joy and sorrow. Whether preaching, visiting the sick, leading Bible studies, or simply sharing a quiet moment of prayer, Pastor Scott embodied the heart of a true shepherd.

Under his leadership, our church grew in spirit. He championed outreach programs, nurtured our youth, and fostered a culture of inclusivity and grace. His laughter echoed through the building, his prayers lifted us in times of need, and his presence reminded us of God’s enduring love.

As Pastor Scott enters retirement, we celebrate not just the end of a chapter, but the beginning of a new journey. May this next season be filled with rest, joy and the same peace he so generously shared with us. We send him forth with our deepest thanks and blessings, knowing that his impact will continue to ripple through our congregation for years to come.

Thank you, Pastor Scott, for seven extraordinary years. You have been a gift to us all.

The Congregation Council on behalf of the Congregation

Christmas Caroling



“Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.”



Psalm 96:1

The Christmas season is here, and we’re excited to share the good news of Christ’s birth through joyful song! Join our church family for an evening of Christmas Caroling, as we bring the light and love of Jesus to our community.

Date: Friday, December 12th

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Meeting Point: We will meet at 5:30 PM in Fellowship Hall for a casual meal of pizza, hot cocoa, and cookies.

We’ll visit nearby homes as well as Frederick Living and Walnut Woods to spread holiday cheer and the message of hope. All ages are welcome! Come with a joyful heart and your warmest smile! Song books will be provided.

Let’s lift our voices together in praise and celebration of our Savior’s birth!

Sign-up online at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4EAFAC2CAAF4C16-60675164-christmas> or use the QR code.

For more information, contact Nikki Young, Jean Moser or Patricia Nyce.



Pastor Scott’s Last Service

Join us for a very special final service for Pastor Scott on Sunday, December 28th. (This will not be a lessons and carols service – that will be on January 4th.) Worship will begin at 9:00, followed by a reception. You will not want to miss this!

Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 14th

Members of the congregation are encouraged to attend the special congregational meeting on December 14th following the worship service to approved the 2026 proposed general fund budget. Copies of the budget are available on the church's website at www.newhanoverlutheran.org, the information box outside the Sunday School door under the portico and in the welcome center.

Informational meetings will be held on Sunday, December 7th, following the worship service in room 33 and on Wednesday, December 10th, at 6:00 PM in fellowship hall.



Advent Social

Sunday, December 14th, 2 – 4 PM

Activities include making crafts, playing games and decorating cookies, bags and cards for NHELCL homebound members. Snacks will be served.

Bring a donation of personal care items such as tissues, toothpaste, toothbrushes, Chapstick, lotion, individually wrapped snacks, etc. to be put in the homebound members' December senior bags. There is a paper sign-up sheet on the desk in the welcome center and also on sign-up genius at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4EAFAC2CAA F4C16-60204971-advent>. To help with planning for this event, sign up by Sunday December 7th.

NHELCL hosts

Coventry Singers Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 7th, 3:00 PM

Need help getting into the spirit of Christmas? The Coventry Singers will perform a concert, "Holiday Journeys", featuring Amahl and The Night Visitors, by Gian Carlo Menotti and other festive music, carols and songs.

Cheryl Markofski will conduct the presentation with accompaniment by Eleanor Lundy. Soloists include Mary Jo Heacock, Ava Berksky, Daniel Ramsey, Jesse Shutt and Matthew Ramsey.



A freewill offering will be received.

Point to Ponder

Dutch Catholic priest and theologian Henri Nouwen found it useful to reflect on several questions at the end of the day: "Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing?" Pondering such questions may prove valuable at the end of a year as well: "How did I contribute to peace in the world this past year? Did I bring smiles to others' faces? Did I offer words of healing?" Nouwen continued, and we can too: "Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?"

Many of us set New Year's resolutions for self-improvement, asking, "What are my goals? How can I better myself, my weight, my work-life balance, my habits?" But Nouwen said of his self-inquiry: "These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and [in] the life to come." His resolution was to share God's love with others. With God's help, it can be ours as well, for each new day and each new year.

Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 21st, 10:15 AM

Come support our children and enjoy our 2025 Christmas Pageant. Regular J.A.M. will not be held that day. Bring cookies or a snack to share. Drinks will be provided. We cannot wait to see you there!



Throughout December, our J.A.M. time will be a bit different. Kids for Christ (KFC) and the J.A.M. Choir will rehearse from 10:15-10:30. If your child is not in one of those groups, you are welcome to come to the nursery (for the opening program, play and social time!) The pageant rehearsal will take place in the fellowship hall. Any kids or youth not participating in the pageant will be doing activities with Vicki Mutter and Lindsey Waltermeyer. See Nikki with any questions! There will be no J.A.M. on December 28th nor January 4th. J.A.M. will resume on January 11th.



This year, NHELC will co-host a community-wide Blue Christmas service. Blue Christmas is meant to be a quieter and more reflective service. Maybe you are not feeling the holidays this year, perhaps you are grieving something, or you just want to take some time to get away from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and reflect. Join in this meaningful service at St. Luke's Lutheran in Obelisk located at 3206 Big Road in Zieglerville. Nikki Young will be helping with this service.

Do you like to read?

Readers are needed for the Lessons and Carols service on January 4th. Sign up today to reserve your reading for this festive service. A sign-up sheet is on the desk in the Welcome Center.



The Angels' Song in Three Words

On the very first Christmas Eve, frightened shepherds were suddenly surrounded by light and music. A choir of angels filled the night sky, singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14, KJV).

Nineteenth-century pastor Charles Kingsley reflected on how those simple words — glory, peace, and good will — still capture the meaning of Jesus' birth and the hope it brings.

Glory

God's glory isn't shown in dazzling displays of power but in humility and mercy. The baby in the manger revealed God's greatness by stooping low, forgiving, and showing love.

Peace

True peace is more than the absence of conflict. It comes when we follow God's example of selflessness, giving up pride and selfish ambition to live in harmony with one another.

Good will

God's good will toward us is a gift that transforms our lives. Through Jesus, God invites us out of selfishness and sin into a life marked by love, kindness, and community.

The angels' song wasn't meant only for shepherds long ago. It still sings to us today, calling each of us to live in glory, peace, and good will.

Breakfast Fellowship

Women's Breakfast

Wednesday, December 10th, 8:30 AM
 Shorty's Sunflower Café
 1494 North Charlotte Street

Women meet on the second Wednesday of the month. Reservations are required. To reserve your seat, contact Lynn Fegley at 484-300-6281 by Tuesday noon before the breakfast.

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, December 13th, 8:00 AM
 Brookside Family Restaurant
 1338 North Charlotte Street

Men meet the second Saturday of the month. No reservations required. For more information, contact Ron Fegley at 484-300-3025.

God on Tap

Thursday, December 4th
 6:00 PM
 Main Street Pub, Bally



Come enjoy a dinner and discussion at the next God on Tap. The discussion topic will be "Does God have an agenda for us at birth or does His agenda morph along with our mortal life?"

RSVP to Randy Dotterer via email (rdptw6489@gmail.com) or text (610-306-0621) by noon on December 4th. Hope to see you there!

Prepare Cemetery for Christmas

If you have fall decorations on your loved ones gravesites in the church cemetery, please remove them by Friday, December 5th, to make way for the Christmas decorations.



Thank you

On behalf of the 325th Anniversary Committee, I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who played a part in commemorating this extraordinary milestone in the life of The New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church. Your enthusiasm, dedication, and love for our church have made this celebration truly unforgettable. As we reflect on 325 years of faith, fellowship and service, we look ahead with hope and purpose. May God continue to bless our congregation and guide our ministry as we carry forward the legacy of those who came before us. Thank you for being part of this journey.

In Christ,

Barbara Eisenhart, chairperson
 325th Anniversary Committee



Wonderful Counselor
 Mighty God
 Everlasting Father
 Prince of Peace

Submit your 2025 annual report

Committee and board reports
 for 2025
 are due in the church office by
 Monday, January 5, 2026.



Donations help local families

Throughout the months of November, December, January and February, NHELCC is collecting non-perishable food items and full-sized personal hygiene items to be distributed to local families through the Pottstown Cluster. Collection boxes are located in the welcome center, fellowship hall, and multi-purpose room for the donations.

The Following are the **Most Needed Food Items** for the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities:

- Fruit Juice
- Shelf Stable Milk
- Canned Oranges
- Canned Pineapple
- Pasta in Sauce (Chef Boyardee)
- Canned Chicken
- Chicken & Dumplings
- Spam
- Pork n Beans
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly

Ready Made Meals: hormel.com/brands/hormel-compleats-microwavable-meals

Thank you for your contributions that will help those in need.

Winter clothing drive

Friends, our church has been helping to feed the hungry at Emmanuel Lutheran Church every month. We discovered their clothes closet needs help. We ask for used, clean, in good condition, warm clothes. Also, hats, gloves, mittens and hoodies are needed too! The ladies at the closet are in need of NEW socks and undergarments. Our junior/senior high Sunday School class decorated a box that is sitting in the welcome center for your donations.



Mission Service needs your help!

Redner's Save-A-Tape

Keep up the good work with turning in your tapes! The last batch we turned in contributed \$141.72 to the NHELCC treasury. This money we used to help others. Please ask your family and friends to help.

Soda Tabs

Take the time to pop off your tabs and place them in our fish tank in the fellowship hall. By doing this simple action, your otherwise discarded tabs will support the Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Soda Cans

And, your empty aluminum soda cans can help raise money too! Drop off your soda cans in the giant wooden bin next to the door of the Sunday School wing. Scout Troop 367 collects and recycles them to help raise funds for camping equipment.



Book Club



The NHELCC Book Club is reading *Summer Sisters* by Judy Blume. Join the club for dinner and book discussion at the WQ Diner in Pottstown on Tuesday, February 3rd, at 6:30 PM. Any questions about this event, contact Sharon Tracey at LBD36@aol.com.

A message from the Pastor

Holiday Travel

The story of Christianity includes at its beginning a fantastic account of a journey. It began from the beginning of time, foretold by prophets of old, proclaimed by messengers from above, and carried out by unlikely parents of humble beginnings. The couple traveled a long distance with their precious cargo, only to arrive at their destination with more challenges than an expecting couple should have as a proclaimed event of enormous magnitude.

Their journey was of course a king's decreed census; however, we have come to celebrate this culminating event as the birth of our messiah, our savior, our prince of peace. Since then, Christmas has become a tradition of travel. Some travel to family and friends, some to vacations, and some prepare to host the traveling horde. And with all, expectations to celebrate another year, and anticipations for the following year.

In our lives as individuals, families and communities of faith, we all experience what it is to look back and ponder what happened and what did not occur in the past year. Some events which we had no control, and some which seemingly waned away before we could get to them. However, as

the saying goes, it is what it is. Staring in the rear-view mirror while traveling can only lead to crashes and more challenges.

I am amazed as we, New Hanover Lutheran, look forward and find ways to celebrate new beginnings and work together to overcome challenges. While nothing we can do will rival the birth of our savior, we can all celebrate the ministries which we found ways to navigate through the challenges of our journey together. This past year, we started the Sunshine Learning Center, the youth started a praise band (Kids For Christ, KFC) our children started a Jesus and Me (JAM) choir, and we are recognized nationally as an ELCA Reconciling In Christ partner Congregation.

That is amazing and would be a testimony for most communities of faith. However, not us, for we expanded a thriving Loaves & Fishes meal ministry serving other locations, expanded the Garden of Hope 100% to include more growing beds and fruit trees, expanded the Peer Support ministry to include Grief Share groups and Suicide Prevention advocacy. Our Mission/Service teams extended our sewing and knitting talents to create care items for children in medical care.

So, as we prepare for our holiday travels, say a prayer of thankfulness for God sending God's son for our salvation and those saints that have kept us on this journey for 325 years. In addition, say a prayer of thankfulness for God's continued blessing on our new journeys this past year in serving and loving others. Marsha and I pray, that you and your family may enjoy God's blessing on your personal journeys of Faith this past year and into the future.

Merry Christmas and God Bless you all,

Pastor Scott



Council Corner

Highlights from the November 20th Meeting

Finance continues to monitor the 2025 Annual Budget against actuals. Currently we are running a total surplus YTD as of June 30 was \$15,000. The total income at the end of October (83.3% of the year) was at 105.0% of budget and expenses were at 86% of budget. Budget surplus is currently due to bequest dollars being held in the General Fund until transferred to the Endowment Fund (\$56,000). The projected deficit for the end of year is ~\$15,000 once the bequest funds are transferred.

The approved 2025 General Fund budget is a **deficit** budget of ~\$60,000. In order to eliminate the deficit, provide for timely benevolence payments, continue programs, and maintain our staff the Council is strongly encouraging each giving unit to increase giving to the extent possible by 20%. On average across all giving units this equates to \$7/week, \$30/month, or \$361/year. Please consider your giving in 2025. Thank you for your continued support!

The Council has reviewed and provided input to the 2026 Proposed Budget. The congregation will have opportunity to review and input via informational meetings prior to the December 14th Special Congregation Meeting at which the congregation will vote to accept or not the proposed budget. More information will be distributed via the letter officially announcing the meeting.

The Council has approved a compensation package for Nikki Young starting January 1, 2026 (as part of the 2026 Proposed Budget). Nikki will be our Interim Minister and part-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry until a Senior pastor is called. We are blessed to have Nikki as part of our transition between Senior Pastor to help maintain continuity of our worship and ministries.

Councilmember nomination cycle for the 2026 Council are now open. If you have an interest in serving as a Councilmember please talk to any current Councilmember for information. The current 2025 Council has nine Councilmembers out of twelve expected positions.

As a reminder - the pastor is available for personal meetings Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM by appointment only. Please make an appointment by calling (610) 326-1335 or email at psstaub@gmail.com. Given prior commitments and events, some appointment times are not available.

All meeting and event requests by committees, members or non-members are to be communicated to the Church Office Manager. Susan Gutshall, NHELCO office manager, manages the master calendar for all activity and facility use to support minimizing conflicts. Committees and boards - please be sure to notify Susan of all activities planned at the church. This is especially important during the Sunshine Learning Center renovation process.

If you unlock a door for church access, lock the door behind you. Doors have been left open causing a security risk.

Giving/offering envelopes - if you do not need offering envelopes please see Scott Geiser or Susan Gutshall (Simply Giving, other electronic giving).

The next Council meeting (open to all members) is scheduled for December 18, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.



December Celebrations

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to the following men, who will celebrate a 90+ birthday.

December 15th

John LeVan

Celebrates his 92nd birthday
35 North Walnut Street #214
Boyertown, PA 19512

December 22nd

Paul Knauer

Celebrates his 92nd birthday
2262 Big Road
Gilbertsville, PA 19525

December 31st

Ray Feick

Celebrates his 94th birthday
2987 Lutheran Road
Gilbertsville, PA 19525

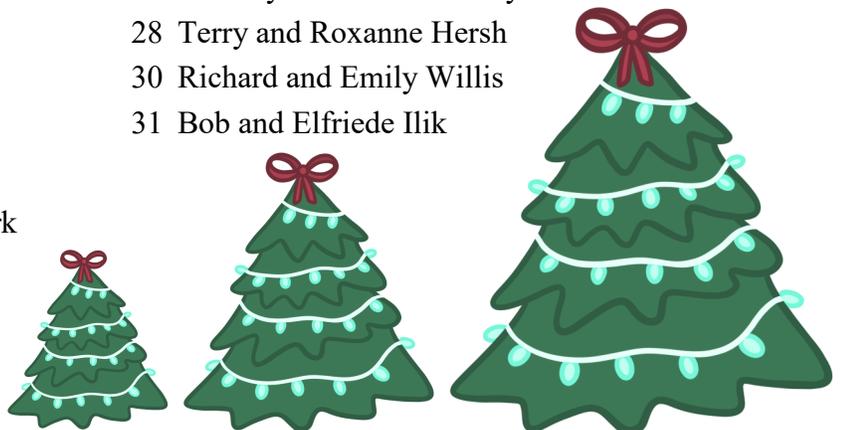
Other December Birthdays

- 1 Kathy Kane, Michael Wirt
- 2 Chris Fatzinger, Elfriede Ilik, Rochelle Morrell, Doug Senne
- 3 Thomas Hennessey
- 4 Daniel Dinsmore, Bill Kingsepp, Samme Marazas, Alivia Singley
- 5 Alec Domenick
- 6 Nancy Gross, David Lynn, Camryn Urbassik
- 7 Becky Gallagher, Andrew Ortiz, Chase Sharp, Nathan Smoot
- 8 Peter Wurst
- 9 Ryan Fegley, Jayne McHugh, Yvonne Peto
- 10 Doris Callow
- 11 Rachel Clark, Kendra Holiday, John Nuss
- 12 Ryan McNichol
- 13 Shannya Wentzel, Roger Yost
- 14 Joelle Ammarell, Peyton Comtois, Angela Kirn, Lois O'Dell, Raymond Velazquez, Michelle Williams
- 15 Denise Gaugler, Ayva Wojnarek
- 16 William Boys
- 17 Carl Asti, Rachele Kunsch
- 18 Bree Hennessy, Jonathan Mayan, Stacey Shirk
- 19 Domenic Capone
- 20 Scott Ehling, Jeffrey Moser
- 21 Justin Duncan, Joe Houseal, Landon Woods
- 22 Brittney Agliano, Michael Norris

- 23 Norman Hunsberger
- 24 Tom Kehs
- 25 Natalie Weller, Johnathan White, Nicholas White
- 26 Barbara Eisenhart
- 27 Jeffrey Antonuk, Darlene Medlar, Lucille Miller
- 28 Beth Yost
- 29 Julia Camp, Andrew Zuchero
- 30 Deb Becker, Joanne Evans, Joan Flack, Jennifer McCarthy, Helen Weaver
- 31 Joseph Allen

Anniversaries

- 12 Mike and Sheri Wenerowicz
- 14 David and Bonnie Eichenlaub
- 18 Kyle and Dee Singley
- 25 John and Hazel LeVan
- 27 Zachary and Madison Mayan
- 28 Terry and Roxanne Hersh
- 30 Richard and Emily Willis
- 31 Bob and Elfriede Ilik



Welcome Statement

You are always welcome at New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are a growing community of believers in Jesus Christ, rooted in God’s love and guided by Christ’s example. We strive to reach out with compassion, offering a place where you can grow in faith, experience God’s grace and feel safe and celebrated. At New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church, we want you to gather with us at our table. Rooted in our Lutheran faith and belief that we are all children of God and made in God’s image, we welcome all people with dignity and love.

In Romans 15:7, Paul writes, “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”

By this belief, we are committed to intentionally following Jesus’ example of unconditional hospi-

tality, love and justice. Here, you are not only included, you are respected. We affirm and value people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, cultures, ages, abilities, body sizes, relationship statuses and economic or immigration statuses. We are committed to the ongoing work toward racial equity and inclusion in all we do. You are invited to fully participate in our worship, sacraments, leadership positions, gatherings, and ministries. In our identities, we are united by the common faith we hold, and recognize we each offer unique gifts and perspectives. We believe that this transforms lives and deepens the faith of our community.

Christ’s door is open to all, so is ours.





Let’s keep in touch



The New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church
2941 Lutheran Road
Gilbertsville, PA 19525

610-326-1335
www.newhanoverlutheran.org
facebook.com/NewHanoverLutheranChurch

Office Hours
Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 2 PM
Call for an appointment.



2025 Council



- Edward Becker, treasurer
- Monique Becker, secretary
- Scott Geiser, financial secretary
- Marty Hauser, vice-president
- Jim Mack
- Yvonne Peto
- Todd Rothermel, president
- Andy Van Dyke
- Nikki Young, seminarian minister
- The Rev. Scott Staub, pastor

Are you interested in serving on Council?

Contact any member of Council for more information.

Council meets the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM.

Meetings are open to all members.