



Longswamp United Church of Christ

The Beacon

September 2026

Teaching, Sharing, and Acting on what we believe



*Wherever you are
on life's journey,
you are welcome
here!*

*Worship:
Sundays @
10:15 am*

200 Clay Road,
Mertztown, PA 19539

www.longswampucc.org

October Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday, September 15th

Contact Us

Church Office: 610-682-6230
Monday-Friday
9:30am - 2:30pm
secretary@longswampucc.org

From the Pastor

Rev. Kimberly Berenotto



I've been thinking a lot about impact and legacy as we prepare for the 40th anniversary of the Longswamp Learning Center this month.

It is remarkable to celebrate 40 years of providing affordable and quality child care for our community. The impact of the Learning Center reaches beyond what we see in our church on Sunday mornings...the Learning Center is stability for families with two working parents, it's relationships that many kids maintain through their whole lives, it's providing jobs for local folks, it's giving our school district flexibility for children that need care before and after school, it's a safe place to grow and learn. None of which would be possible without the dedicated employees of the Learning Center and the Board of church volunteers that oversee it all.

If Longswamp UCC is known as the white church on the hill with the daycare, that's a worthwhile legacy to have. It started with a choice this congregation made 40 years ago to lead with compassion and care, and to follow Jesus when he said in Matthew 18:5, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

All of this pondering on impact and legacy felt more poignant with the death of Dolly Parton this past week. A household name in our country; Dolly Parton was known for much more than her country music, her movie stardom, or even her amusement park.

When you think about someone who's life has reflected Christ's calling, particularly his calling to care for children, Dolly Parton was right on the mark. Her Imagination Library provided free books to children every month from birth to age 5, because she valued literacy and knew that started at home. My family (and many families from the Learning Center) received free books from Dolly Parton and they covered a variety of topics; from love of nature, to managing big feelings, to complicated relationships, to the joy of living! Each book also had something extra - tips and tricks on how to read with your kids and get them engaged and instill a love of reading.

The Imagination Library is just the tip of the iceberg when it came to Dolly Parton's generosity. She funded music programs in a variety of inner city and impoverished school districts, she provided incentives for high school graduation for teens in Appalachia, she donated significant funds to disaster relief, medical research, animal shelters and more. Dolly Parton is very-much an example of the kind of impact and legacy a person can have when they lead and live with generosity. Forbes reported a few years ago that Dolly Parton could easily have become a billionaire, but instead she donated hundreds of millions of dollars to those in-need throughout her lifetime. I could quote scripture all day long to show that we are called to provide for others instead of storing up treasure on earth. Just a few verses after Jesus teaches about welcoming children, he says in Matthew 19:21 "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven..."

Perhaps the Longswamp Learning Center's impact and legacy isn't as widespread or fiscally significant as someone like Dolly Parton. But, choosing to open the Longswamp Learning center and choosing to live a life like Dolly Parton, is rooted in the same generosity, compassion, and care for community. And if more people followed that lead in their own lives, we could create a world that looks like God's kingdom on earth.



"I pray every day. I pray about everything. I ask God to lead me and guide me in all the decisions I make – and to bring all the good and right people into my life and to let me do something to glorify God and uplift mankind."

DOLLY PARTON

Sharing Our Faith

September 2026 Worship Schedule

Services Sundays at 10:15 am

On-site and live stream worship service ("Longswamp UCC" Facebook page). Afterward, service is uploaded to our "Longswamp United Church of Christ" YouTube Channel.

September 6- Special Music: Glenn Fisher on Flute

September 13- LLC's 40th Anniversary Celebration during worship (with Special Music led by Ms. Marji). Fellowship after the service on the playground

September 20- Holy Communion, Family Sunday, Secret Church Friends Reveal

September 27- Regular Worship

September Ministry Partners

Greeters

Sept 6- Will Miller

Sept 13- The Lishmans

Sept 20- Shirley Solt

Sept 27- Leo Desrosiers

Readers

Sept 6- Hope Deiaco

Sept 13- Sue Lishman

Sept 20- Bob Friedly

Sept 27- Nathan Wegner

Head Ushers

Sept 6- Will Miller

Sept 13- Theresa Haffner-Stearns

Sept 20- Shirley Solt

Sept 27- Leo Desrosiers

September Altar Flower Sponsors

Thank you to Jess and Matt Salvaterra for providing us with flowers from their farm on some of the days that we do not have Altar Flower Sponsors!



Reminder: The church office will be closed on Monday, September 7th, for the Labor day Holiday.

Celebrating 40 Years of Longswamp Learning Center



Sunday September 13th

10:15 am

Family-Focused & Celebratory
Worship Service

with Special Music from Ms. Marji

Followed by Food & Fellowship Time
out on the LLC Playground

ALL ARE WELCOME!



AN OLD FASHION FAMILY

BARN DANCE



Saturday September 26th

**5:30 pm to 9:00 pm
@ Savidge Farms**



**-FOOD & DRINKS - KID'S ACTIVITIES - HAYRIDE -
CORN MAZE --CAMPFIRE & SMORES - BASKET RAFFLE-**

**LIVE MUSIC BY
MIKE & LINDA HERTZOG
AND DANCE CALLER
LESTER MILLER**

Wear your barn dance best and join us for fall family fun!
Sponsored by Longswamp United Church of Christ.



TICKETS ARE LIMITED!
\$5 PER ADULT - KIDS ARE FREE!
CALL: 610-682-6230
VISIT: WWW.LONGSWAMPUCC.ORG



GUTEN TAG!!

Wow! 2026 is halfway through and schools are preparing to open. The daylight is getting shorter and the dog days of summer have come and gone. However, the end of July and beginning of August continue to be busy times at Longswamp UCC.

On July 26, Pastor Kim took a well deserved break and vacation Sunday. Thank you to Pastor Sue Lishman for preaching about Bees and leading worship. Kudos to Laurie Heagy for providing the Welcome and Announcements.

August 2 was a lively day at the church. After learning about how Bees communicate during the sermon, we held an all-church picnic in the pavilion. The highlight of the afternoon was seeing all the children thoroughly enjoying the water slide and breaking the piñata. I think it is safe to say that an all-church picnic might become an annual event.

Our July global mission was for the benefit of Heifer International. Thank you to everyone who generously supported the July mission. I am happy to report that the donations totaled \$1200. We were able to sponsor 40 honeybee gift donations, which was double the original goal of 20. Heifer will then distribute the bees throughout the world to families who are experiencing poverty and hunger.

Mini Bible studies about Joshua were held on August 5th and 12th. In preparation for our trip to Sight and Sound, we learned about Joshua, Rahab, and the many battles the Israelites fought as well as the struggles they faced on the way to the Promised Land. Pastor Kim made the sessions informative and fun.

On August 9, we began our final summer series titled "Disappointing Disciples." During the children's message, Pastor Kim told the children about mistakes that the disciples made and that we are all human and tend to make mistakes too. The children then went to Children's Church and studied about Joshua. We marched and blew our trumpets until the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. We also began our August 2026 mission for the benefit of the students of Brandywine Heights High School. We collected healthy snacks and school supplies. Mission offerings were greatly appreciated and were used to purchase additional items.

On August 14 several of our members and friends traveled by bus to Sight and Sound in Lancaster to see the showing of Joshua. The music and Broadway-style production was fantastic. The good food at Hershey Farm Resort and fellowship following the show was enjoyed by all. In closing, please remember the assurance God made in Joshua 1:9 NRSV: "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Until the next time, Mach's gut und Auf Wiedersehen!!



LUCC's "Acting" Ministry Theme for 2026 **"Doing God's Work in Today's World."**

September 2026 - December 2026 (1st Sunday of each month)- Our Church's Wider Mission

(OCWM)- The 4,500 congregations of the United Church of Christ covenant together to put God's love into action in our communities and across the world. In isolation, no single congregation can completely answer God's call to love. Together we are a bold witness to God's extravagant love for all. We share resources to bring our vision to life. Gifts from congregations like ours to OCWM Basic Support make it possible for our Conferences and the National Ministries to strengthen local churches and leaders and engage us in mission well beyond our community.

(taken from: <https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/>)



Ongoing Mission for the Brandywine Food Pantry

The number of residents who utilize the Brandywine Food Pantry is constantly increasing. Please consider helping our underprivileged neighbors by dropping off your donations of non-perishable food, personal care items, paper products, and/or household supplies before or after our worship services on Sunday mornings, or during the week from 6:30 AM - 5:30 PM. Please put your donations in the appropriately marked wicker tote box in the bell room.

Heifer International July 2026 - Global Mission - Update

Once again, our "big white church on the hill" did a FANTASTIC JOB with our global mission in July 2026 as we supported Heifer International in its work to end global hunger and poverty in a sustainable way while caring for the Earth. Our mission offerings totaled a phenomenal \$1,200. We were able to sponsor 40 honeybee gift donations (\$30 each) for our July 2026 mission. Thank you to everyone for your extremely generous support of Heifer International!



Healthy Snacks and School Supplies for students at Brandywine Heights High School Local Mission - August 2026

What an overwhelming response we had to LUCC's mission in August 2026! We did an AWESOME JOB of providing healthy snacks and school supplies for the students at BHHS from Sunday, August 9 through Monday, August 31, 2025. As of the writing of this article, our mission offerings totaled \$475. We used our mission offerings to purchase a variety of extra healthy snacks and school supplies. Some of the donated items were delivered to BHHS prior to the first day of school. The remaining items will be delivered to the high school during the first week of September. As always, thank you for your very generous support of the students at Brandywine Heights High School!

September 2026- Two-part Internal Mission...

Longswamp Learning Center

Did you know that the Longswamp Learning Center (LLC) has been the primary mission of our church for 40 years? What a great way for LUCC to support the families of our community by providing quality child care for four decades! Let's show the Learning Center children how much we care about them and show our appreciation for the wonderful work that the staff does every day. (LLC started out as a Community Preschool back in September 1986. Today, they have classes for 6 different age groups ranging from infants to school-age children.) The first half of our September 2026 internal mission will be supporting the Longswamp Learning Center children and staff by providing boxes of tissues (cube, rectangular, "gentle/extra soft ones" for the cold months, please!) and rolls of paper towels. Please deposit your donations of "extra soft" tissues for the children's "little noses" and rolls of paper towels in the boxes on the round table behind the piano. Please contact Jill Shade (484-894-0636; jill.shade@longswampucc.org) if you have any questions or concerns about our September 2026 mission for the benefit of LLC. Thank you in advance for your caring support of the children and staff of the Longswamp Learning Center!



The Barn Dance

We are so excited for our third annual Barn Dance, which will take place at Savidge Farms on Saturday, September 26th, from 5:30-9pm.

Mike & Linda Hertzog will be providing music and Lester Miller will once again be calling square dances. Our food this year is Schaeffer's Food Truck and we will see the return of our bake sale, raffle baskets, popcorn, drinks, kids games, and more! The event is rain or shine and we always have a great time!

Since we have so many fun opportunities for our community at the Barn Dance, we need your help to make it happen! Firstly, we are looking for raffle basket donations. If you're interested in making a basket, please sign up on the board in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Charlene Rachor, who is organizing this area, or the church office. We also will need donations for our Bake Sale, which offers a large variety of baked goods for a donation. If you'd like to bake an item or two, please sign up on the board in the narthex, or contact Barbara Karom or the church office. Lastly, we are always in need of volunteers for general help. From setting up and cleaning up, to collecting tickets, to decorating, to making sure everything is running smoothly, we have a lot of shoes to fill to keep the Barn Dance going without a hitch. There's a sign-up sheet for general volunteers, too, or you can contact the church office. Monetary donations are also always appreciated.

If you have any questions, please let Maggie, Pastor Kim, or Laurie know!



Part 1- LLC

Part 2- Barn Dance

Teaching What We Believe



There is something for kids and families every Sunday at Longswamp UCC!

Children's Church is the name of our Sunday School Program. We kick-off the Sunday School year and our curriculum on Sept. 6th. See the schedule below to find out which Sundays kids will join the teachers in the Preschool Room during worship (after the Children's Message) for games, crafts, Bible Stories, and more. Sunday School is open to kids of all ages!

Your family is welcome any and every Sunday - and as always our PrayGround will be open each week (with extra activities on the Sundays there is no Children's Church). The PrayGround is our area in the front left of the sanctuary set-up especially for kids and has fun ways for children to engage in worship.

September 6: Sunday School

September 13: LLC Celebration - Special Family Sunday

September 20: Family Communion Sunday

September 27: Sunday School



And so it begins! It's hard to believe that 2026-27 school year has already begun! The students' first day for BHASD was on Tuesday, August 25th, which means that our before and after school care program started that day, as well. Even though school started, we look back fondly on our summer memories.

Our Summer Camp theme was "Space," and the students went on an outer space adventure. We had "Astronaut Training Camp," which led to Rocket Launches, Alien making, and galaxy painting. We had our usual field trips to various parks around our area, to Out Of Your Mind Art Studio, Seussical the Musical, and saw movies at the Boyertown theater. We also had a visit from Marian and Friends, a ventriloquist who is also Jill Shade's cousin. The children absolutely LOVED seeing Marian and all her puppets!

A new year also means new students starting in our Infant through Preschool programs! We welcomed some new students to the center and made some "graduations" to the next room. There certainly is never a dull moment at LLC.

We want to invite everyone to our 40th anniversary celebration during the church service on September 13th. We're so excited to celebrate forty whole years of Longswamp Learning Center!

Lastly, we also want to invite everyone to our Trunk or Treat in the parking lot on October 23rd. Trunk or Treat starts at 6pm and we always have such a great time. Keep an eye out for more info coming soon on how to sign up and what to expect!



You are welcome at Longswamp UCC's multi-generational Women's Group! Each month we travel to a local spiritual sight in search of knowledge and new faithful experiences that help us grow!

Our next Field Trip is planned for Wednesday September 9th to Columcille Megalith Park in Bangor, PA with lunch to follow. We will be learning about Celtic and earth-centered spirituality. There are a variety of sights near the parking area and then you will choose how much more walking you would like to do around the park. Please wear sturdy shoes as the ground can be uneven.



On Sept. 9th we will be leaving the church parking lot at 9:00 am. We plan to return for 3:00pm. Please RSVP to Maggie or Pastor Kim to ensure we have enough drivers.



FALL IS ALMOST HERE!

- Info about the Christmas Musical "In a Galilee Far Far Away" is coming soon! Practices will begin late September/early October and Pastor Kim, Maggie, and Liz are working RIGHT NOW to assign roles to everyone!



- Longswamp Learning Center's Trunk or Treat is Friday October 23rd in the evening. We love to see our church's family and friends trick-or-treating around the parking lot. You are also welcome to host your own trunk or help with the church's table or *new this year* Spooky Woods Walk! Sign-up forms coming soon!



- The Annual Food Sale is November 14th and there will be MANY opportunities to cook, bake, and help leading up to that date - plus we also need help on Nov. 14th in the morning to assist with food sorting, distribution, and pick-up!



TOP SECRET

Join us on Sunday, September 20th, for our Secret Church Friends reveal during the church service! Secret Church friends is a way to welcome new members. A member/family will agree to be the secret church friend of a new member and give them three gifts or acts of kindness from now until September 20th to welcome them to our Church Family!

Family & Community Updates

September Birthdays

Sept 2- Grant Clark, Kelli Deiacco, Crystal Meck

Sept 6- Pastor Kim

Sept 9- Steven Graham, Kaitlyn Steventon

Sept 11- Sue Lishman, Kevin Shoemaker

Sept 12- Karen Friedly, Katie Shade

Sept 13- Aaron Hengst

Sept 15- Laurie Heagy

Sept 16- Cindy Masenheimer, Nick Strunk

Sept 23- John Samuelson

Sept 26- Matthew Masenheimer, Geraldine Stoudt

Sept 28- Mila Jones

September Anniversaries

Sept 12, 1998- Craig & Dawn Weller

Sept 21, 2024- Barron & Kallie Carter-Kistler



The first practice for the Choir will be on Wednesday, September 9th at 7pm! If you're interested in participating, please contact Laurie or Vern. Practices will continue on Wednesdays at 7pm.

Dear Jill and to the congregation of Longswamp UCC,

I want to thank you again formally for all the support that you have all shown me and my family especially through the past recent years. Through my journey in the military, overseas and then back home in school, you all have exemplified what it means to show love and support to members of this body of Christ. Whether it be the snacks or the letters from the congregation, I always find myself smiling when I see the Longswamp UCC logo on a package or a letter. Thank you for always being there to support me and remind me how good a family of faith that God has provided to me and my family.

Sincerely, Zachary Rachor

Did we miss your birthday or would you like it to be added? Please let Maggie in the office know!

Congratulations to Zachary Strunk and Jasmine Boyer on the birth of their son, Chance Levi Strunk! He was born on April 30th, 2026 and joins big brother, Eren Strunk! Welcome!



Prayers Needed



Church Family Prayer Needs: George Unger, Ramona Romanik, Wilma Lease, Karen Friedly, Annabelle Weller, Doris Epting, Bob Fritz, Fern Fritz, Brenda Bower, Shirley Solt

Serving Our Country: Zachary Rachor, Alexander Jenkins, Adam Hapenovich, Tyler Reed

Church Friends Prayer Needs: Karen McPherson, Vanover Family, Matt Von Detto, Robin Hoffman

Church Business

July 2026 Financials

Income and Expenses

Member Giving:	\$16,608.00
Other Income:	\$8,635.31
Total Income	\$25,243.31
Expenses:	\$18,690.67
Net Income:	\$6,552.64
Building Fund Expenses:	\$4,436.22
Memorial Fund Income:	\$1,000.00

Message from the Treasurer

Included in member giving for missions are \$275 for Our Church's Wider Mission and \$893 for Heifer International (bees mission.) Included in Other income is \$2,600 for the Learning Center facility use fee, \$2,281.31 for the cell tower lease fee, \$3,307 for Sight & Sound and \$195 for Iron Pigs tickets. Included in Building Fund expenses are \$493 for cleaning, \$660 for mowing, \$406.53 for water testing and equipment maintenance, \$2,167.33 for 2 months of electric service and \$709.38 for heating oil.

Account Balances as of 8/27/2026

General Fund Checking:	\$46,767.12
Contingency Fund Checking:	\$3,022.82
Memorial Fund Checking:	\$20,050.44
Building Fund:	\$39,991.10
Building Fund Checking:	\$27,387.47

REMINDER: The last day to get scholarship materials in is September 1st! Scholarships are available for anyone in an undergraduate or secondary education program.



Did your address, email, or phone number change? Would you like to get the newsletter by mail or email and don't? Are you unable to come to church and would like a visit? If any of these situations apply to you, please reach out to the church office so we can best serve your needs!

Church Staff

Pastor - Rev. Kimberly Berenottopastorkim@longswampucc.org.....610-401-1847
Office Administrator & Newsletter Editor - Maggie Isamoyer...secretary@longswampucc.org
LLC Director - Sharon Wetzelsharon@longswamplarningcenter.com.....610-682-9750
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Maintenance Manager - Ray Ziegler.....raymond.ziegler@yahoo.com

Longswamp UCC

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on what we believe.

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