



Longswamp United Church of Christ

# The Beacon

March 2025

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

Hospital Code #451  
(LVHN, St. Luke's)

**April Newsletter  
Deadline:  
Tuesday, March  
18th**



[www.longswampucc.org](http://www.longswampucc.org)

## Contact Us

Church Office: 610-682-6230  
Monday-Friday  
9:30am - 2:30pm  
[secretary@longswampucc.org](mailto:secretary@longswampucc.org)

# From the Pastor

Rev. Kimberly Berenotto



We are all searching for something in life. Perhaps you're looking for a sense of peace or some calm and stability. Maybe you're hoping for joy-filled days and a time of adventure and connection. Sometimes we don't even know what we are looking for (and we certainly don't know where to find it).

The season of Lent offers us a special time, as we head toward Easter,



Seeking Lent 2025

Search

to search for what we need and to reflect on where our journeys of faith are leading. So, we will be spending Lent "Seeking the Savior" – searching for the places Christ shows up in our lives, in our world, and in our scripture. And, we'll have the opportunity to do this in a few ways.

First and foremost is in our "Seeking the Savior" worship series. Our scripture each week will lead to a different place we find Christ; from right at home to within the noisiness of an unpredictable world. This will be paired with a fun photo series called "Where in the World is Pastor Kim?" Each week on Facebook and in worship you'll get to see pictures and videos of me in different local spots that will help to emphasize that Sunday's scripture lesson. It will be fun to see if you can guess each week where I am and how it connects to our "Seeking the Savior" theme.

We'll also be finding Christ around the world with our Lenten Bible Study; "Traversing Traditions". Each Wednesday in Lent you can join us in Fegely Hall at 10:30 am or 7:00 pm to learn how Christians across the globe observe Lent and celebrate Easter. This will be a fun and hands-on study of our faith!

If that isn't enough searching and seeking for you, I have two available options for Lenten Devotionals. The first is a special Seek & Find devotional booklet that fits with our theme this Lent. All families are welcome to take one home. Additionally, I always contribute to a Lenten devotional with other UCC pastors in our region. This includes daily scripture readings and reflections and will be available on our website, or you can contact the office for a print copy.

I want to express gratitude to my colleague, Pastor Becky Sausser, who worked with me to develop this Lenten series. And, I hope this Lenten season can be a meaningful time for our congregation to more deeply search for what we need on our faith journeys, and to seek out the unique places Christ shows up in our lives and in our world.

# Sharing Our Faith

## March 2025 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.

**-March 2nd-** Transfiguration Sunday. Special Music from Loft Choir and Glenn Fisher on flute.

**-Wednesday, March 5th-** Ash Wednesday Service (with Loft Choir) @ 7pm. Ashes also available from 8:30am-3:30pm in Pastor Kim's office.

**-March 9th-** 1st Sunday in Lent with Special Music from Theresa on Guitar.

**-March 16th-** Holy Communion and Shoemaker Baptisms

**-March 23rd-** Special Music from Children's Choir

**-March 30th-** Special Music from KU Brass Students

## March Ministry Partners

### Greeters

**Mar 2-** Vern Shade

**Mar 9-** Sarah Marburger

**Mar 16-** Theresa Haffner-Stearns

**Mar 23-** Willard Miller

**Mar 30-** Justin Smith

### Readers

**Mar 2-** Kim Jenkins

**Mar 9-** John Samuelson

**Mar 16-** Helena Lindquist

**Mar 23-** Mary Samuelson

**Mar 30-** Charlene Rachor

### Head Ushers

**Mar 2-** Vern Shade

**Mar 9-** Sarah Marburger

**Mar 16-** Theresa Haffner-Stearns

**Mar 23-** Willard Miller

**Mar 30-** Justin Smith

## March Altar Flower and Bulletin Sponsors

**-March 9th-** In loving memory of Althea and Jeannette Walbert

**-March 16th-** In loving memory of mother and father, Marcia and Ralph Rivo by Amy Rivo

**-March 23rd-** In loving memory of Daniel Desrosiers, by Leo, Laurie, and Bradley.

# Ash Wednesday



Worship with  
Communion and  
Imposition of Ashes  
March 5th at 7:00 pm

Pastor Kim will also have  
ashes available in her office  
from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm if  
you stop by.



This year, Lent will include a special photo series called "Where in the World is Pastor Kim?" Each week on Facebook and in Worship you'll get to see pictures and videos of Pastor Kim in a different location. That secret location will help us to better understand that Sunday's theme and scripture as we spend Lent "Seeking the Savior!" Will you be able to guess where Pastor Kim is each week?



Daylight Savings Time begins on March 9th! Remember to turn your clocks an hour ahead!



Lent 2025 at Longswamp United Church of Christ

# Seeking the Savior



*Join us as we find Christ in scripture, in our community, and in our world.*

Sunday Worship at 10:15 am

3/9  
Christ in the Wilderness

3/16  
Christ in the Past

3/23  
Christ in Abundance

3/30  
Christ in our Homes

4/6  
Christ in the Unexpected

4/12  
Christ in the Noise



During the month of March we will be celebrating a new stewardship and giving campaign at Longswamp UCC. Traditional stewardship and giving campaigns are ways churches seek out funds to keep the church running. HOWEVER, we at Longswamp UCC know there are many ways to give - our time, talent, and treasure. This stewardship and giving campaign will instead be focused on the time and talent we give and the ways that time and talent helps to connect Longswamp UCC with the community.

We will be asking you to pledge your time and talent by taking items off our "Giving Tree" to indicate how you plan to be involved at Longswamp UCC in the upcoming year. These will include pledges for things such as setting up for the Barn Dance, baking for the Food Sale, cooking hot dogs for the Egg Hunt, and more! We will also be launching our Community Connections Team to help oversee all the events we hold throughout the year that reach out to the community. We hope YOU decide to pledge your time and talent to keep Longswamp UCC engaged in the many ways we engage with the folks in our neighborhood.

By in large, during 2025 PNEC will continue to function as it has, even after the General Synod Meeting vote in July when we expect passage of the motion to combine all four Conferences into the combined Keystone Conference. Much of the current year's work at PNEC will be in preparation for the transitions that will officially take place as of January 2026 after the vote. These include decisions which will take place at the four spring Conference Meetings in May on issues like approval of the new Constitution and Bylaws, approving a transition plan, creating a Transition Team, and establishing a Transitional Conference Board. PNEC will hold our Spring Conference Meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Neffs Union Church. Here in the northeast, preparations will be underway to move from being a Conference (and an Association simultaneously) to just an Association. This will require some legal changes to our status, choosing an Association name, and the selection of some members of the PNEC Board (and the other three Conference Boards) to be named to the Transitional Keystone Conference Board.

Another important area of preparation for the transition revolves around finances. The financial staff of the four conferences has been reviewing all the accounts of each conference, financial trends in OCWM funding, and holdings that can be liquidated after the merger and be added to the resources of the new Conference. As one example, PNEC owns the building in Palmerton, and it will be vacated and sold toward the end of this year. (More about this action in future articles.) Other accounts, like those established from bequests to provide scholarships to individuals and other specific purposes, should be maintained to benefit those in our geographic area in keeping with the wishes of the original donor.

The last part of this financial area to consider is OCWM funding. Congregational and individual gifts to OCWM will continue to support PNEC for the remainder of 2025 (with the usual 10% being forwarded to the National Church). But, beginning in 2026, OCWM giving will go directly to the Keystone Conference (with the same small percentage to be forwarded to the National Offices). The financial Staff across the state has projected the OCWM giving trend will decrease by about 25% over the next five years. This has been a continuing trend for some while, and it was one reason that PNEC developed the "Friends of the Conference" campaign encouraging individuals who are able, and willing, to support the conference work directly, apart from OCWM.

Starting in 2026, all the Associations will be responsible for developing funding channels to support the programs and services provided at the association level. This work will include important functions like the Committee on Ministry (which supports and guides individuals in training for ordination and beyond), Congregational Leadership Training, and Search and Call support. We anticipate the "Friends" campaign will remain in place (but be renamed once our Association determines a new name), and other funding sources are being explored.

**If you have questions about the work of the Conference through this time of change, feel free to contact me at [hklindquist@ptd.net](mailto:hklindquist@ptd.net).**

## Acting on Jesus' Teachings



### *LUCC's "Acting" Ministry Theme for 2025* "Missions - Around the Church, Around the Community, and Around the World"

**March 2025 - December 2025 (1st Sunday of each month)-Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)**

Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support provides funding for the work of UCC Conferences and for the work of the UCC's national ministries.

Each congregation decides how much of its members' financial support it will contribute to Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support. (Please

note: LUCC contributes quarterly the total of our members' donations denoted for this national UCC mission offering.

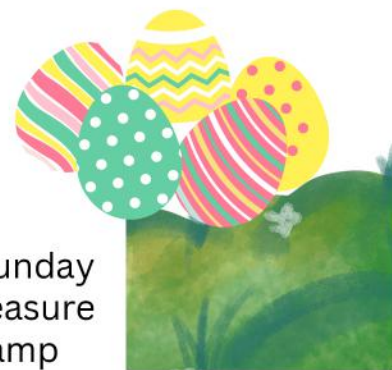


Taken from: <https://psec.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/National-UCC-OCWM-Explainer-10-21-22.pdf>



**March 2025 - December 2025 ongoing mission for the benefit of the Brandywine Food Pantry** - Please consider helping our neighbors in need 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.

### **March 2025 Internal + Local Mission: LUCC's Community Egg Hunt**



We are excited to spend the month of March preparing for our Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt! The Easter Egg Hunt is set for Sunday April 13th after worship. We will need all sorts of time, talent, and treasure to make the Egg Hunt happen for the kids in our church, the Longswamp Learning Center, and the community.

Be on the look-out for ways YOU can be involved. This will include:

- Filling Easter Eggs! Bags of plastic eggs designated for various age groups will be available in the Narthex for you to take home, fill with treats, and return.
- Assisting with the goody bags we make for each kid who attends the Egg Hunt.
- Volunteering on April 13th during the Egg Hunt! We need many hands starting before worship to hide the eggs, set up the parking lot, and prepare food. Then after worship we need friendly faces to help run the Egg Hunt, guide families to the right place, distribute food, and more.
- You can also contribute monetarily to the cost of the Egg Hunt in the offering by using your March Mission envelope or a regular envelope marked "Egg Hunt."

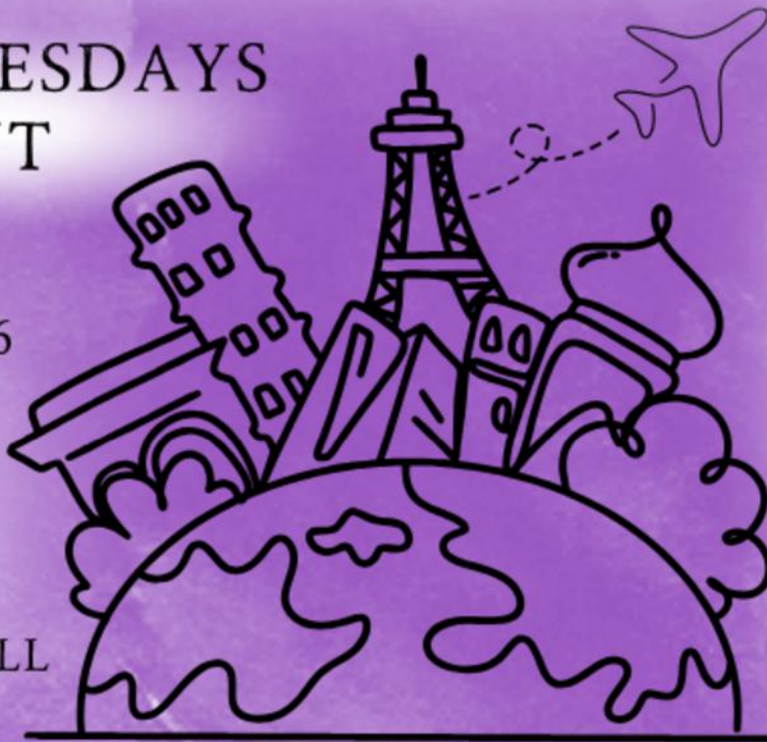
# TRAVERSE THE TRADITIONS

*How Christians observe Lent & Easter around the globe.*

## WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

MARCH  
12, 19, & 26  
APRIL  
2 & 9

10:30AM  
OR  
7:00PM  
FEGELY HALL



Join us to learn about Lent and Easter traditions all over the world! Explore unique celebrations from giant omelettes to flying kites!



## COMMUNION CLASS

SUNDAY  
APRIL 2ND  
AFTER CHURCH

Longswamp UCC is holding a Communion Class for students in 2nd through 6th Grade. Kids who attend will have the opportunity to learn more about the Last Supper, be in fellowship with one another, and have some fun too. Lunch will be provided. We practice an open table, so parents can choose when they feel it's appropriate for their child to receive communion. This class will help parents and kids feel ready if they do decide it's time to receive communion on Easter Sunday (April 20th)! Please contact Pastor Kim with any questions.



LONGSWAMP UCC  
**CHILDREN'S  
CHURCH**

Children's Church meets every Sunday during worship. Kids begin in church and then head to the Preschool room for stories, games, crafts, and more!

LLC News



Valentine's Day came and went at LLC and the children loved getting to exchange valentines with each other. Some of the classrooms had special desserts to share and others participated in making Valentine's themed art.

We've had quite a few two hour delays and a couple of virtual days this winter. We are all ready for warmer weather and to be able to go outside and play on the playground. We always stay busy inside, of course, by dancing, playing, and marching through the hallways.

Coming up, we will be celebrating Dr. Seuss week by reading his books and having themed days such as hat day and pajama day. The Cat in the Hat (aka Miss Sharon) also might be creeping around the center so we'll be keeping our eyes peeled!





# Family & Community Updates

## March Birthdays

- March 1-** Franklin Sterner
- March 3-** Kim Jenkins
- March 6-** Dawn Strunk
- March 8-** Theresa Haffner-Stearns, Allison Isamoyer
- March 10-** Dawn Weller
- March 11-** Noah Andrews
- March 13-** Zachary Strunk
- March 15-** Fern Reidnauer
- March 21-** Bob Friedly
- March 23-** Mary Samuelson
- March 24-** Amy Rivo, Skylar Strunk
- March 25-** Susan Voortman
- March 27-** Robert Schierer

## March Anniversaries

- March 1, 2014-** Elizabeth & Mark Moser
- March 5, 1960-** Barbara & Paul Weller
- March 14, 1992-** Dawn & Derek Strunk

## Heavenly Notes Update

Heavenly notes started in 2014 and is used to connect with our LUCC members. Brenda, Karen, and Shirley send out birthday cards, get-well cards, sympathy cards, and just general “thinking of you” cards to our members, including those on our Senior Saints list and those who have been recently hospitalized. If you would like to receive or write cards, please let Maggie in the office know! **In 2024, a total of 155 cards were sent out.** Thank you for your support of this ministry!

## *LUCC's Men's Group*

The men's group will continue to meet at the Hometown Diner on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7pm. If you need more info or have questions, please call or text Justin Smith at 610-529-3394



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Longswamp Union Cemetery Association has scheduled a volunteer walk through and spring clean up of our jointly associated cemetery property on Sat. March 15, weather permitting. No heavy lifting, just checking for left over pots, low spots, re-seeding areas, etc. We can give credit for community service hours if needed. Thanks!

## *Prayers Needed*



- Church Family Prayer Needs:** Barbara Eck, George Unger, Ramona Romanik, Fern Shade, Wilma Lease, Karen Friedly, Annabelle Weller, Doris Epting
- Serving Our Country:** Zachary Rachor, Alexander Jenkins, Adam Hapenovich, Tyler Reed
- Church Friends Prayer Needs:** Tracey Lutz



# LUCC BUS TRIP TO

# NOAH

30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



**WHEN:** Friday, August 1st, 3pm  
Showing

**COST:** \$112 for Adults  
\$62 for kids 3-12

Cost includes the ticket and dinner at Hershey Farms Smorgasbord

Please contact Maggie in the church office to reserve your spot!  
We have 50 tickets available. Family and friends are welcome!

More info to follow



## Children's Choir Schedule



Rehearsals: March 9th & 16th  
Singing in Worship: March 23rd  
Rehearsals: March 30th & April 6th  
Singing in Worship: April 13th



## Marking the Days of Lent

If you are interested in a Lenten Devotion, Pastor Kim has 2 options for you!

First is a special Seek & Find devotional booklet that fits with our theme of "Seeking the Savior" this Lent. All families are welcome to take one home.

Additionally, Pastor Kim always contributes to a Lenten devotion with others regional UCC pastors. This includes daily scripture readings and reflections and will be available on our website, or you can contact the office for a print copy.

# Church Business

## January 2024 Financials

### Income and Expenses

Member Giving:	\$5,526.53
Other Giving:	\$5,065.89
Total Giving:	\$10,592.42
Expenses:	\$21,983.34
<b>Net Income (loss)</b>	<b>\$11,390.92</b>
Building Fund Checking Income:	\$0
Building Fund Expenses:	\$5,628.03

### Account Balances as of 2/24/2025

General Fund Checking:	\$39,782.42
Contingency Fund Checking:	\$3,022.36
Memorial Fund Checking:	\$13,138.94
Building Fund:	\$1,064.90
Building Fund Checking:	\$51,597.54

### Message from the Treasurer

Included in member giving for missions are \$497 for Our Church's Wider Mission and \$150 for Backpack Buddies. Included in Other income is \$1,983.75 for the cell tower lease fee, \$2,600 for the Learning Center facility use fee. Included in General Fund expenses is \$2,952 for copier supplies contract and \$2,179.83 for the new security monitoring system. Included in Building Fund expenses are \$1,115.39 for propane to heat the sanctuary and Boy Scout cabins, \$1,082.21 for the annual contracts for pest control at the church and Schubert Haus, \$493 for cleaning services, \$1,888.79 for 2 months of electric service, \$654 for the monthly heating oil budget payment and \$394.64 for water testing and equipment maintenance.

**Has your address, phone number, or email changed? Please let the church office know! It helps us immensely to keep updated contact info in case we need to get any messages or important announcements out.**

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Please contact the church office if you don't see it here! Please inform us, also, if you want to be added to our email list!

### Church Staff

**Pastor** - Rev. Kimberly Berenotto .....pastorkim@longswampucc.org.....610-401-1847  
**Organist & Choir Director** - Ann Mabry Miller .....ann@longswampucc.org  
**Office Administrator & Newsletter Editor** - Maggie Isamoyer...secretary@longswampucc.org  
**LLC Director** - Sharon Wetzel .....sharon@longswampllearningcenter.com  
**LLC Office** - 610-682-9750  
**Church Board President** - Laurie Heagy.....laurie@longswampucc.org .....484-269-4619  
**Maintenance Manager** - Dwayne Snyder.....dwayne@longswampucc.org

# Longswamp UCC

Planting seeds of faith by  
teaching, sharing and acting  
on what we believe.

## Our Newsletter

*The Beacon*  
*March 2025*



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