



Longswamp United Church of Christ

The Beacon

December 2025

Teaching, Sharing, and Acting on what we believe



*Worship:
Sundays @
10:15 am*

**200 Clay Road,
Mertztown, PA 19539**

www.longswampucc.org

**January Newsletter
Deadline: Tuesday,
December 16th**

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

Contact Us

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

From the Pastor

Rev. Kimberly Berenotto



I read a headline this past week stating: “Advent Calendars are Out of Control!” However, I’m not sure how critical I can be of the plethora of Advent calendars available for the general public. Let’s be real, my dog, Dipper, has an Advent calendar.

Protestants in Germany in the 1800's began the tradition of counting down the days until Christmas by making chalk marks on walls and doors, lighting candles, or placing straw in the Nativity Scene each day to prepare a bed for Jesus (because you wouldn’t put Jesus in your nativity scene until Christmas).

By the 1850's, this practice evolved into handmade wooden Advent calendars that included religious images for each day leading up to Christmas. The first printed Advent calendars were created in 1903 by German publisher Gerhard Lang. He produced Advent calendars on thick cardboard with little doors that opened to reveal religious illustrations and text. The calendar was inspired by a cardboard Advent calendar his mother had made for him when he was a child; however there are rumors his mother included cookies as well as religious teachings in his childhood Advent calendar!

In 1946, German printer, Richard Sellmar, picked up the mantle of Advent Calendar production - his first one featuring a bucolic and peaceful winter scene. Sellmar is responsible for international distribution of these calendars too, and his work is what brought Advent calendars to the U.S.A.

The cardboard Advent calendars with little doors revealing religious teachings became the mainstay for counting down the days to Christmas. Until the 1970's, when Cadbury (in Great Britain) decided that only the most faithful folks were really benefiting from the Advent Calendar, and perhaps the less-churched crowd could use inspiration in the form of a chocolate a day. Things have taken off from there as you can now purchase Advent calendars filled with just about anything: Legos, jelly, alcohol, nail polish, cheese, coffee, soaps, science experiments, and MUCH more. Plus, you’ve got manufacturers claiming that any of these calendars, regardless of the season of the year or the amount of days, are “Advent” calendars. As if the word Advent just means countdown!

So maybe Advent Calendars ARE out of control. Regardless, what’s most important is remembering what that Advent Countdown is for; marking the days we spend waiting for Jesus’ arrival. Advent is not Christmas; it’s a season of hope, of anticipation, of recognizing darkness as the light of Christ grows brighter and brighter until Christmas day.

Perhaps candles *were* the best way to mark those days, in recognition of the light that is coming to us. Or, perhaps, *you* feel the light of Christ grow most when you open that Advent calendar door to reveal a chocolate, some cheese, mascara, a Lego car.....I won’t judge you! I’ll be over here opening the little door each day in December to give my dog a treat. But, I’ll also be remembering, it’s Advent, not Christmas. A time to reflect, a time to hope, a time to embrace darkness in anticipation of what’s to come.



“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...”

Isaiah 9:2a





December 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.

- December 7th- Nativity Set Show & Share
- December 14th - Annual Family Christmas Musical: A Longswamp Carol
- December 21st -Moravian Love Feast
- December 24th- Christmas Eve Services @ 7pm & 11pm
- December 28th- Casual Service of Carols & Stories

December Ministry Partners

Greeters

- Dec 7- Vern Shade
- Dec 14- Sue & Al Lishman
- Dec 21- Theresa Haffner-Stearns
- Dec 24 (7PM)- Charlene Rachor
- Dec 24 (11PM)- Chris Freudig
- Dec 28- Laurie Heagy

Readers

- Dec 7- John Samuelson
- Dec 14- none needed
- Dec 21- none needed
- Dec 24 (7PM)- Amy Riovo
- Dec 24 (11PM)- Needed
- Dec 28- Vern Shade

Head Ushers

- Dec 7- Vern Shade
- Dec 14- Will Miller
- Dec 21- Theresa Haffner-Stearns
- Dec 24 (7PM)- Charlene Rachor
- Dec 24 (11PM)- Chris Freudig
- Dec 28- Laurie Heagy

December Altar Flower & Bulletin Sponsors

December 7th- In loving memory of Jeanette Walbert's birthday.

December 14th- given by Hope Deiacio in loving memory of her mother, the writer, Jean Butz Stoneback.



CHRISTMAS EVE

All are welcome!



SERVICES AT 7:00PM OR 11:00PM

ALL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES INCLUDE COMMUNION, YOUR FAVORITE CAROLS, & SILENT NIGHT SUNG BY CANDLELIGHT
(GLOW STICKS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE UNCOMFORTABLE HOLDING A LIT CANDLE).
THERE WILL BE A CHOIR ANTHEM & CHILDREN'S MESSAGE AT 7PM.
THE 11PM SERVICE IS QUIETER AND MORE CONTEMPLATIVE.



Nativity Set Show & Share

2nd Sunday of Advent
December 7th
10:15 am

Join us for a special worship on the history and meaning of nativity scenes. You are encouraged to bring along a favorite nativity set to display during worship. There will be tables around the sanctuary for your nativity sets and cards to fill out to identify who's it is and where it came from. We will get to learn more about each other and Christ's birth from sharing these unique holiday decorations!



Poinsettia Orders

Poinsettia Orders are due by December 3rd! If you would like to order but do not have a form, please call or email the church office! We are once again ordering from Glick's Greenhouse and will need all orders by December 3rd. You'll be able to pick your poinsettias up after the Christmas Eve services. Thank you for helping to spread the beauty and joy of the Christmas season!



Breakfast with Santa!

Boy Scout Troop 575, which meets down in the LUCC Boy Scout Cabins, is holding a breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 13th at St. Paul's Lutheran, Mertztown. Breakfast will be served from 8-11am. It's \$10 per person, ages 9 and up and \$6 for kids 4-8 years old. Make sure you stop by and support Troop 575!



Moravian Love Feast

Join us the 4th Sunday of Advent for a special service to celebrate the love that comes to us as Jesus born in a manger.

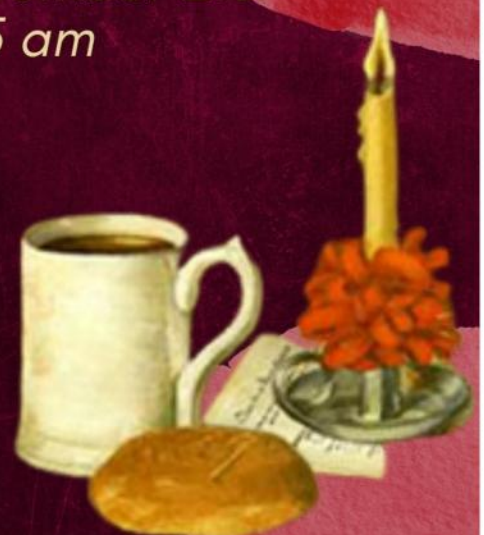
Sunday December 21st
10:15 am



Ted Williams, Guitar



Sergiane Williams, Harp



Featuring the music of The Williams Duo



A Longswamp Carol

Will the kids of LUCC find
what they're looking for
in time for Christmas?

Join us and find out!

December 14th
10:15 AM

Longswamp United Church of Christ
200 Clay Road
Mertztown, PA 19539

Written and Directed by Hope Deiaco
www.longswampucc.org Poster art by Maggie Isamoyer

Save the Date for our Epiphany Celebration!



Close the holiday season with the arrival of the Wise Men at the manger on Sunday January 4th! We will have a special Sunday Service a 10:15 am surrounding the Magi, distribute star words for the New Year, and conclude worship with an open house of food and fellowship at Schubert Haus hosted by Pastor Kim and her family!

Leadership Updates



I've been thinking about how to simplify all this talk of the new conference, the new association, transitional boards, transitional budgets, etc. It's a lot of change, especially for us at PNEC who have only heard about "the conference" for so many years. It came to me that the easiest way to outline what is happening is that... "all that used to be accomplished by the conference, and the support services they offered to our member churches" will now be divided and originate from either the state-wide, centralized Keystone Conference, or from the more local Mountain Valley Association. As a member church of each organization, we are being asked to send financial support to both entities like we have supported all those services through funding support of OCWM through PNEC.

It's logical to redirect our (former) OCWM gifts between Keystone Conference and Mountain Valley Association since the services available to us from PNEC in the past will now originate from one of the two separate entities. For church financial administrators, a remittance form is being developed for churches to simplify submitting to the two offices.

PNEC will accept funding for OCWM as usual for 2025 until it closes the books for the final year on January 15, 2026. After that, support for OCWM (and mission organizations such as Phoebe Ministries, Lancaster Theological Seminary, and Kids Peace) for 2026 should be directed to the Keystone Conference at P.O. Box 6625, Harrisburg, PA 17112.

Also, beginning on January 16th, funding for programmatic support for churches in our area (like Search and Call, Pastoral Support, Clergy and Lay Leadership Training, Candidates on the path to Ordination, and the Committee on Ministry) should go to Mountain Valley Association at 105 East 19th St. Northampton, PA 10867. This office space is donated by St. Paul's UCC church.

One more note, the Friends of the Conference Program which was developed for individual church members in PNEC interested in funding the work of the conference directly (without going through the OCWM route), will be renamed "Friends of the Mountain Valley Association" and that will still be an option to support the Association and the programs it offers congregations in our area directly.

Our Association will be overseen by an eight-person Board of Directors including the four officers (Moderator, Asst. Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer) and the chairs of the four Standing Committees (Committee on Ministry, Nominations Committee, Search and Call, and the Program Committee. The Board is supported by Rev. Dr. Nora Driver Faust of the Keystone Conference, who will be Mountain Valley's Transitional Regional Conference Minister for our area. We will also have the support of Paul Keller as our office administrator (a communication specialist, also a Keystone employee, who I believe will write the conference newsletter). And there will be one more part-time person who will primarily maintain databases for the Association.

If you have any questions, please contact me at hklindquist@ptd.net





LUCC's "Acting" Ministry Theme for 2025

"Missions - Around the Church, Around the Community, and Around the World"



Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)- First Sunday of Each Month

What is OCWM? - Most of our OCWM Basic Support dollars remain in our Conferences to help local congregations thrive. Direct support in

Conferences comes through leadership initiatives, such as communities of practice, committees on ministry, and one-on-one mentoring. Conferences also share in congregational vitality work. This includes conflict transformation, resourcing leaders as they reimagine ministry, and grants to churches.

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



2025 Ongoing Mission for The Brandywine Food Pantry

Let's help make the holidays a little brighter for the food-insecure residents of the Brandywine Heights Area School District. Please drop off your donations of non-perishable food items, personal care items, household items, cleaning supplies, etc. 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.

December 2025 Mission

LUCC's Christmas List

Longswamp UCC's Christmas List is back for another year. During the month of December, make sure to check the board in the narthex for our "wish list" items-- everyday expenses that keep the church running. Examples of these items range from our monthly oil payment to monthly electric to our Children's Church curriculum. If you'd like to help us to offset some of these costs, please take a slip from the board and make sure to put it with your donation, marked "LUCC's Christmas List." We've had such a great outpouring of support these last few years and this December mission really helps us to meet our budget for the year. Thank you in advance for your support!

Thank you!

LUCC shared the joy of Christmas with others by participating in Friend, Inc. Community Services' Christmas Cheer Clothing Project and the Operation Santa Program at Phoebe Allentown. A HUGE "THANK YOU" to our LUCC members and friends who helped brighten the Christmas holidays for twenty local children and twenty-five residents of Phoebe Allentown by providing special presents for them. LUCC's donations of Christmas presents will be delivered to the appropriate organization in early December.

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

On Sundays kids begin in worship and, after the Children's Message, head to our Sunday School program called Children's Church. Kids of all ages can join the teachers in the Preschool room for Bible Stories, crafts, games, and more. Kids are also always welcome to stay in worship with their families. .

New this school year: Family Sundays! Once a month, on Communion Sunday, we will have Family Sundays! There will be no Children's Church, instead families can worship together. Plus, the children can more fully participate in communion.



Check out our new PrayGround! We now have a special area for kids in the front left of the sanctuary to quietly play, learn, and participate in worship in ways that suit kids best! This area will have extra activities on Family Sundays, but will be available every Sunday for any kids who choose not to attend Children's Church. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Kim!

Advent Craft Day

THURSDAY DECEMBER 4TH



Craft Night

6:30 PM

FEGELY HALL

All families and ages welcome for a variety of Advent craft stations in Fegely Hall. Even if you can't be there right at 6:30, join us anytime before 8pm for a fun evening. Bring a snack to share!



You're Invited...

JESUS' BIRTHDAY PARTY!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST

AT 10:15AM

IN FEGELY HALL

Kids begin in worship and then go to Fegely hall
for crafts, games, snacks, and fun!

**We will be having food. Please let the
teachers or Pastor Kim know if your child has
any allergies!



LLC News



It's crazy to think that the holidays are already here! The first few months of school have flown by. We had our annual trunk or treat and Halloween parade in October. We will be having our Thanksgiving celebrations during the upcoming week. Then we'll be getting ready for the Holidays!

Our Holiday Pageant will be on December 19th and all of our classrooms have been practicing their songs! Miss Marji (Pastor Kim's Mom) will be accompanying our Preschool and Older Toddler classrooms. It'll be tough work, but we are trying to get our Younger Toddlers (1-2 year olds) to sing "Jingle Bells" and "Twinkle Twinkle, Christmas Lights." While they have a hard time with the words, they sure know how to ring the jingle bells the teachers give them!

We have a new teacher, Miss Ella, who joined us in November! She will be working in our Younger Toddler room. We're so happy to have her here with us!

We also want to give a shoutout to Miss Sharon, who made ALL of the cut-out cookies for our Food Sale! Thank you Sharon!

Family & Community Updates

December Birthdays

December 1- Dean Shoemaker, Sophie Wegner
December 4- Doris Epting
December 7- Roxanne Reimert, Al Lishman
December 13- Diane Shoemaker
December 17- Zoe Rachor
December 19- Allison Hengst, Hannah Wegner
December 20- Willard Miller
December 21- Benjamin Jenkins
December 27- Linda Davis
December 29- Willow Hapenovich
December 31- Derek Strunk, Susan Sterner, William Weller

December Anniversaries

December 9, 1967- Al & Sue Lishman
December 11, 1982- Jill & Vern Shade
December 12, 2004- Harry & Melody Bruen
December 27, 1986- Kim & Ren Jenkins

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!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Matthew and Alice Masenheimer on their marriage in October of 2025! Matthew is the son of Tim and Cindy Masenheimer. Congrats to the newlyweds!

Pastor Kim and LUCC-

I hope you're doing well! Things are great here at Smith College. I just wanted to thank you and the rest of the congregation for your care package and the help with the scholarship. I absolutely loved the gifts and my snack stash is now thoroughly replenished! Plus the scholarship money will go a long way towards my student loans. Thank you (and everyone else) so much for everything! I can feel all of the support all the way over here. I really miss you guys and I can't wait to see the play through the livestream (my dad has given me plenty of updates)!

Love,
Everet Smith

Dear Friends-

Thanks to all at LUCC who keep me in prayers. Thanks for all my church family. Your cards make me proud. Good luck with the food sale! All so yummy! Miss all of you. Stay well and safe. God bless all,

Love, Ramona Romanik

Prayers Needed



Church Family Prayer Needs: Barbara Eck, George Unger, Ramona Romanik, Wilma Lease, Karen Friedly, Annabelle Weller, Doris Epting, Bob Fritz, Fern Fritz.

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

Church Friends Prayer Needs: Jean, Karen McPherson, Matt Von Detto, Barbara Jennings, Robin Hoffman

Church Business



October 2025 Financials

Income and Expenses

Member Giving:	\$6,328.70
Other Income:	\$6,405.75
Total Giving:	\$12,734.45
Expenses:	\$14,610.21
Net Income (loss)	\$1,875.76
Memorial Fund Income:	\$0
Building Fund Expenses:	\$10,057.94

Account Balances as of 11/21/2025

General Fund Checking:	\$36,669.52
Contingency Fund Checking:	\$3,022.59
Memorial Fund Checking:	\$14,600.21
Building Fund:	\$2,990.19
Building Fund Checking:	\$5,280.23

Message from the Treasurer

Included in member giving for missions are \$170 for Our Church's Wider Mission and \$878 for Friend, Inc. Included in Other income are \$1,159 for the barn dance, \$1,983.75 for the cell tower lease fee, \$2,600 for the Learning Center facility use fee and \$663 from the Food Sale.

Included in Building Fund expenses are \$785 for heating oil, \$950.01 for electric service, \$493 for cleaning services, \$890.99 for water testing, treatment, and equipment maintenance, \$465 for mowing and trimming, \$2,151 for the annual HVAC service contract and \$220.44 for the state boiler inspection fee.

Dear Friends at Longswamp UCC-
Thank you! Your recent generous gift of \$903 from the October Mission will go a long way towards helping individuals and families

throughout Northern Berks County. You are helping alleviate hunger, mitigate financial crisis, and providing other life sustaining support. None of this is possible without the kindness of people like you. Simply put, your continued support makes our community a better, safer place to live.

Jim Reece, Executive Director of Friend Inc.

Church Staff

Pastor - Rev. Kimberly Berenottopastorkim@longswampucc.org.....610-401-1847

Organist & Choir Director - Ann Mabry Millerann@longswampucc.org

Office Administrator & Newsletter Editor - Maggie Isamoyer...secretary@longswampucc.org

LLC Director - Sharon Wetzelsharon@longswampllearningcenter.com

LLC Office - 610-682-9750

Church Board President - Laurie Heagy.....laurie@longswampucc.org484-269-4619

Maintenance Manager - Daniel Dolich.....daniel.dolich@longswampucc.org

Longswamp UCC

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

Our Newsletter

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