Muddy Creek Lutheran Church

January 2026

Newsletter

A New Year Prayer

Lord, as we embark on this new year, we lift up to you, our loved ones, our communities, and the world. May your peace reign in our hearts and in the hearts of all people. Bring healing where there is brokenness and reconciliation where there is division. **Amen**.

Greetings, Muddy Creek Family,

It's hard to believe that we have been together for six months already—the time has flown by! From post Pentecost, to Reformation, All Saints, Advent, and now the Christmas season. What a blessing to share those sacred and holy liturgical moments with you. Thank you for the cards, gifts, and well wishes. They certainly brightened my Christmas.

As we begin to settle into the New Year, we are often bombarded with questions about our plans, goals, …and oh yes, New Year Resolutions. It is as though the Ball dropping in Times Square somehow restarts everything and we can begin anew. Despite our knowing that we awake to new mercies each morning and that each dawn is the beginning of a new year, we place special emphasis on the calendar/Julian new year.

I find that it is faithful to look forward and it is also fruitful to remember what we've accomplished. For many, a new year is exciting but for many it is exhausting; some enter with anticipation and others have anxiety. As we hold space for our joys and journeys and those of our siblings, I hope we ponder the calendar year we put to a close. What things changed for you in 2025? How has your life been enriched? What longings, losses, and lessons learned will carry you through this year?

When I think about these things, I am reminded of the words to the hymn, *Love Has Come*:

Love has come – a light in the darkness,
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all Heaven has come to proclaim it,
Hear how their song of Joy arises.
Love! Love! Born unto you a Savior,
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

May the Love and Glory of God be a constant comfort to you – this month and throughout the year.

The Light has come, its majesty revealed, all for you!

In the Light and Love of Christ,
Pastor Chavis

We'd Love to Hear From You!
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Church Council Year in Review

The year 2025 brought several significant changes to our congregation: first, the retirement of Pastor Peter, and the call for Pastor Chavis to be our Interim Shepherd and lead us into the next chapter. In addition, we have undertaken the important task of hiring a new Administrative Assistant. A Call Committee has been appointed and is actively working on the task of calling a new Pastor. This thoughtful and prayerful process takes time, and we appreciate your patience as this work continues.

Safety and Security has also become a priority of this Council, and a Safety and Security Task Force was named at the November meeting. Lauren Gallagher will serve as Chair of the Committee. Before naming the Committee, Pastor Chavis and members from Council and the Property Committee met with an East Cocalico Police Department Detective and the Chief of the Cocalico Area Fire Department. Both toured our facility and gave suggestions for keeping our members safe. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding as we begin to implement these changes.

We received a new updated AED and will be putting up additional signage that indicates its location. Unfortunately, we had to postpone the Annual Meeting to approve our budget and hold elections for the open Council and Cemetery Board seats (the first time was due to lack of a quorum; the second time, we closed because of our icy parking lot). We are actively addressing snow removal Issues; it is our hope that this will not be an issue in the future.

I also want to express my thanks to the four Council members who are completing their terms: Gail Bare, Nick Duong, Bill Lausch, and Stephanie Spangler. They have been faithful stewards in the work of the church.

Thank you to the members of Muddy Creek for your faithful support, **Audrey Noll**

New Items

Giving statements are in! They have been placed in the members' mailboxes in the sanctuary.

The **2026 General Congregational Meeting** will be held on February 8th after the 10:30 service. Please plan to attend to learn more about goals and events for this year. The **Congregational Luncheon** will follow. A main dish will be provided. Stay tuned for more details about side dishes and desserts.

From Partner Ministries

"Brenda and Friends" Bus Trips Feb. 26, 2025 (Thursday) - Neil Simon's "The Sunshine Boys" at Hunterdon Hills Playhouse. *For more information, contact Brenda Berger (717) 336-6886 or berger@dejazzd.com*

Thoughts for the New Year

God doesn't call the qualified,
God qualifies the called.

Worry is the darkroom
where negatives develop.

Give God what's right, not what's left.

Never miss a good chance
to stop talking and listen.

The first rule of holes:
If you are in one, stop digging!

A smile is a curve
that straightens things out.

Thanks

⇒ **Thanks** to all who served, helped coordinate, or attended one or both of the Christmas Eve services. What a wonderful time of fellowship and worship!

⇒ *"On behalf of Good Samaritan Services and the individuals and families we serve, we would like to **thank you** for your recent donation of a new lawn mower on December 8, 2025…Your support helps transform lives and helps our neighbors facing hardship feel seen, valued, and cared for- especially when they might otherwise feel overlooked. Thank you for making a lasting difference.*
With Gratitude, Nate Hoffer, Chief Executive Officer and Mikaela Potrako, Chief Advancement Officer."