Muddy Creek Lutheran Church

February 2026

Newsletter

February Greetings, Muddy Creek,

As we enter this time, I am reminded of all that we will experience in the Liturgical calendar this month – post Epiphany to Transfiguration to Lent. It is an exciting and challenging time—in church and in the world. I am blessed to have the opportunity for us to journey through it together. It is truly a time for reflection, communion, redefining our purpose, and for prayer! Our scripture passage for February reminds us that while there is work to be done, we are never alone. Never forget that Jesus – fully human and fully divine – also prayed.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up
and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.
And Simon and his companions hunted for him.
When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching
for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns,
so that I may proclaim the message there also; for
that is what I came out to do." Mark 1:35-38

The Gospels tell us that prayer was routine for Jesus, and that he often prayed before or after major events. As we enter the season leading up to Easter and the celebration of the Resurrection, remember to be prayerful about how we move forward.

This year, clergy in the Cocalico Conference have decided to continue to share Lenten Services and to also explore the myriad ways we are being called to serve and to worship. With 1 Corinthians 12 in mind, we understand that just as we are one conference with several churches; as it is with Christ, we are many members of the same body.

As we pray without ceasing, let us be in prayer about the programs, pathways, and practices we choose as we seek to grow in the body of Christ. May we continue to work together as faithful proclaimers of the Good News - in church, in the community, and in the world.

Happy Valentine's Day, Blessed Lenten Season.

In the light and love of Christ, I wish you peace,
Pastor Chavis

We'd Love to Hear From You!
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Church Updates

CHURCH COUNCIL

Our Council had a busy month – but we finally had our Congregational meeting on January 22, 2026. On our original date, we were unable to hold the meeting due to lack of a quorum and on the second date we had to cancel due to the icy parking lot. We passed the 2026 expense budget as recommended by council for a total of $247,984. We elected Connie Becker, Craig Brossman, Joe Sanchez, and Richard Yerger to Church Council:. Elected to Cemetery Board was Judy Nichol. Following the meeting , all Council members (currently serving and newly elected) were installed by Pastor Chavis. At our January Council meeting, the Council meeting night was changed from the second Wednesday of the month to the third Thursday of the month. Our Call Committee continues their work – please be patient and keep them in your prayers.

During the month, the Executive Committee and representatives from the Property Committee worked on the issue of snow removal from our parking lots and sidewalks. Our goal is not having to cancel services due to improperly treated parking lots or sidewalks. The Safety and Security Task Force held their first meeting and worked on finding key priorities. Members of the committee volunteered to take lead roles in different areas where they have experience or know where to go for the correct help.

As we continue our work, we will be reaching out to members of the congregation for assistance – some tasks may only require help for brief projects, and we know some people have specific skills/interests which will be helpful to our committee. We currently need someone to fill a one-year unexpired term on the Cemetery Board. If you are interested, please contact me.
With gratitude, **Audrey Noll, Church Council President**

Call Committee Update

The Call Committee consisting of 6 members was elected by the Congregation Council and began serving in June. The Committee has met a total of 5 times during 2025 with the initial duty of preparing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) for Muddy Creek. The MSP is a comprehensive document which outlines the perceived strengths, weaknesses, challenges and needs of our church among many other details. On November 18th, the Call Committee was graced by a visit from Synod Bishop Stephen Herr and his assistant Dean Marsha Roscoe which was an informal but informative meeting.

Upon completion of the MSP by the Call Committee, we met with the Congregation Council and assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Beth Martini on January 22nd for discussion and a final review of the MSP. At the conclusion of that joint meeting the MSP was submitted to Synod. The next step in the process will be for Synod to review our MSP and submit a candidate's name from the Rostered Minister Profiles that have been completed by Pastors seeking a call.

The Call Committee appreciates your patience and prayers during this very important process of calling a Pastor to Muddy Creek.

Michael H. Leid, Chairman, MCLC Call Committee

Partner Ministry Events

"Brenda and Friends" Bus Trips

- Feb. 26th (Thursday) Neil Simon's "The Sunshine Boys" at Hunterdon Hills Playhouse
- March 2nd (Monday) Asher's Chocolate & the Philadelphia Flower Show.
- March 19th (Thursday) "Andy Cooney Irish Cabaret" at Hunterdon Hills Playhouse

For more information, contact Brenda Berger (717) 336-6886 or berger@dejazzd.com

Our Lenten Journey

A Brief History: The term "Lent" originally comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "lencten" which means "spring." This is the time, in the Northern Hemisphere, when the days are lengthening. The season began as period of fasting leading up to the Vigil of Easter. Catechumens, those preparing for baptism at Easter, would fast and spend days in intense preparation. For those that were already baptized, Lent was a period to be renewed in their faith by studying the Bible, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

Although it was originally only a two-day period of preparation, Lent became a three-week preparatory period in the middle of the fourth century and then this was further expanded into six-weeks, or forty days. By the end of the fifth century, there was a desire to exclude Sundays from Lent since Sundays are always celebrated as feasts of the Resurrection. Thus Lent begins not on Sunday, but on Ash Wednesday.

The current practice of forty days of Lent recall Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness after his Baptism (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:1-2) as well as Moses' forty-day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28).

https://blogs.elca.org/worship/430/

The Discipline of Lent

God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But because sin and selfishness often separate us from God, our neighbors, and creation, we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to push against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love—the discipline of Lent—help us to wage our spiritual warfare. Commit to confessing your sins, asking God for strength, spending time in reflection, seeking the good in others, and drawing closer in communion with God.

Reflection

"Even the darkest moments of the liturgy are filled with joy, and Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten fast, is a day of happiness, a Christian Feast."
Father Thomas Merton

Prayer

"O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones.
Let me find you again. Amen."
Henri Nouwen

https://love2justice.wordpress.com/2014/03/02/lent-fasting-and-learning-our-limits/

NORTH LANCASTER / COCALICO CLUSTER ELCA 2026 LENTEN SERVICES			
1 Corinthians 12: *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*			
DATE	**HOST CHURCH**	**SERVICE TYPE**	**NOTES**
Wed 2/18	**ASH WEDNESDAY**		
Noon	Muddy Creek, Denver	Quiet Service, no music	
7pm	Center/St. Paul's		
	Bergstrasse, Ephrata	Traditional Service	
	Faith United, Denver	Traditional Service	
	Muddy Creek, Denver	Traditional Svc w/Choir	
	Mellingers at Swamp	Traditional Svc w/Choir	Pr. Craven preaching
Wed 2/25	**Midweek Service**		
7pm	Faith United, Denver	Candlelit Prayer with Song	For the Healing of the Nations
Wed 3/4	**Midweek Service**		
7pm	Bergstrasse, Ephrata	Interactive Worship	Munchies & Mingling - 6:30pm Embracing change through our habits!
Wed 3/11	**Midweek Service**		
7pm	St. Paul's, Adamstown		
Wed 3/18	**Midweek Service**		
Noon	Muddy Creek, Denver	Traditional Svc w/Choir	Soup Fellowship afterward
Wed 3/25	**Midweek Service**		
7pm	Mellingers, Schoeneck	Song-Play Sermon	
Thu 4/2	**MAUNDY THURSDAY**		
7pm	Faith United, Denver	Traditional w/Footwashing	Eucharist, stripping of altar
	Bergstrasse, Ephrata	Dinner Church - 6 pm	Eucharist, stripping of altar
	Center St./ Paul @Mellingers	Institution of Communion	
	Muddy Creek, Denver	Maundy Service	Eucharist, stripping of altar
7:30pm	Swamp, Reinholds	Traditional w/Footwashing	Eucharist, stripping of altar
Fri 4/3	**GOOD FRIDAY**		
10:30am	Faith United	Denver Prayer Walk	
Noon	Adamstown Cemetery		
3pm	Center Cemetery		
7pm	Bergstrasse, Ephrata	Experiential, Interactive	Readings & pix from trip to Jerusalem
	Faith United, Denver	Trad. w/Candlelighting	
	Center/St Paul @Mellingers	Service of the Shadows	Seven Last Words from the Cross
	Muddy Creek, Denver	Tenenbrae	
8pm	Swamp, Reinholds	Service of Shadows	Seven Last words from the Cross
Thu 5/15	**ASCENSION**		
7pm	Swamp, Reinholds	Traditional Svc w/Choir	Eucharist