

# THE EXPRESSION

January 2022 ~ NEWSLETTER



CHRIST'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
5330 Old Logan Ferry Road  
Murrysville, PA 15668  
(412) 795-1212

Pastor Wayne Gillespie

Email: [office@christsmurrysville.org](mailto:office@christsmurrysville.org)

Website: [christsmurrysville.org](http://christsmurrysville.org)

## Services

Saturday Evening – 6:00 pm

Sunday Worship – 10:00 am

Sunday School – 9:00 am



## ***From the Pastor***

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways, acknowledge the Lord  
and God will make your path straight.”*

**(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

We have been on quite a journey in the last two years, haven't we? On Friday, March 13, 2020, our lives were suddenly changed when schools, businesses and even our church were unexpectedly closed because of the coronavirus. I still remember sitting in front of my computer that evening and working through the night trying to figure out how we could somehow connect with each other on the following Sunday. I had never hosted a meeting on Zoom, and Nancy Sheehan and I worked together to create a worship service that we could broadcast from our homes, so that we could worship

during a time when our lives were rocked to the core. I began broadcasting worship services from inside the sanctuary of our building four weeks later (on Palm Sunday) using my cell phone to provide a Wi-Fi signal while Nancy continued to play the piano at home. And soon, we all began to realize that life was not going to return to normal any time soon.

We had many special Council meetings and tried our best to figure out what to do during a time when today's guidance was replaced by tomorrow's new approach. Pastor Ed and Nancy worked together to record music each week and to make it available through an email link. We ran an Internet cable down the hallway between the church office and the sanctuary to create a better Wi-Fi signal as weeks turned into months. Some of our faithful partners soon worked together to create a permanent solution. We struggled to find a better way to broadcast our worship services and we purchased new equipment. I created video recordings of my messages and posted them on YouTube each week, and I found myself scrambling to create a video Christmas Eve service with the help of Nancy, our many musicians and several others that was viewed by twice the number of people who typically attend our worship services on Christmas Eve. Time passed quickly and I soon needed to create an Easter video utilizing the gifts of many of those same gracious partners in ministry that was viewed by more 760 people on Easter morning.

One of the things that I've learned, even more deeply, during the pandemic is that being the Church is about relationships and community. Nothing has been easy, but we have risen to the challenge. There are many unsung heroes who worked tirelessly to keep our ministry moving forward. We have publicly thanked some of our partners, but others have gone unmentioned. And with that

in mind, I want to offer a more broad and all-embracing word of thanks. We have done an amazing job together!

Several weeks ago, a question was asked that is asked almost every year when we talk about our annual budget and about Mission Support: “What is the Synod doing for us?” I can understand why you ask that question each year because much of what our Synod does is done behind the scenes. You don’t see Bishop Kusserow each week and Bishop Eaton can seem even more remote. You don’t need to think about who is going to lead worship services and help you to find a new pastor when you don’t need that kind of help. But I can assure you that both our Synod and the ELCA have been a vital part of our team as we have traveled through the pandemic together.

Bishop Kusserow has been very intentional about drawing pastors together, so that we can talk with each other about what is working well in our congregations and what isn’t. The Synod staff and the ELCA have helped us to interpret our Constitution in a time when Congregational meetings needed to be held online and when money needed to be spent on major projects like the repair of our drainpipe. The Synod sponsors special gatherings where Council Presidents can discuss effective leadership during these difficult times and continues to train Council members. The Synod helped me to connect with pastors who empowered me to use technology to create videos and online worship services for you. Bishop Kusserow sponsored “Ministerium Mondays” where pastors could gather in a supportive setting to learn and grow, and to care for each other during a confusing and stress-filled time. And, of course, the ministry of the ELCA has continued during the pandemic as well. We are still standing on the front line beside those who are trying to eradicate malaria. Seminaries are still training pastors who

will serve the Church, and universities associated with the ELCA are still offering classes. The ELCA continues to pour money into the relief efforts that help people whose lives have been affected by hurricanes, and the ELCA is once again on the front line to help people whose lives were destroyed by the tornadoes that ripped through our country several weeks ago. Jesus has challenged us to think about what it means to be the Body of Christ throughout the pandemic – both inside the walls of our building and all over the world. The word “Synod,” in fact, is a late Middle English word that was, originally, a Greek word meaning: “On the road together.”

And so, thank you for all that you have done in the last two years to support the ongoing life and ministry of Christ’s Lutheran Church. And thank you, also, for faithfully supporting important parts of the Church’s ministry that are not always easy to see. We truly are “on the road together” as partners in ministry at Christ’s Lutheran Church and as partners in the life-changing and life-giving ministries of both our Synod and the ELCA.

Pastor Wayne

Scott Ritenbaugh — President  
 Joe Kelly — Vice President  
 Ron Spagna — Secretary  
 Dave & Barb Hall — Treasurer  
 Bela Molnar — Financial Secretary

Sandy Buehner  
 Fran Spagna  
 Mary Huffman  
 John Reed

Sharon Pfeiffer  
 Linda Paulovitch  
 Lauren Huffman  
 Michelle Gravante

**CHURCH**COUNCIL



**Church Council Minute Highlights**

**December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

- *Five Focus Points:*
  - Clarifying our Mission
  - Identifying what our partners and community “value”
  - Clear Communication – Messaging – Marketing
  - Building Sustainable & Interactive Ministries
  - Inviting Everyone to Participate – Stewardship
- The parking lot lights have been fixed and replaced.
- The pipe organ is about 50 years old and we are beginning to need consistent/monthly work on the organ. Considering starting an organ fund might be an idea sooner rather than later.
- February Congregational Meeting is scheduled for: February 20<sup>th</sup> 2022 – in person.
- Three people will be going off council and we will be discussing new members at the council retreat meeting.
- We have approved/passed the 2022 budget!

**Next Council Meeting –**  
**Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:30 pm**

Zoom



*Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:*  
*9:15 am - 2:00 pm*

5330 Old Logan Ferry Road, Murrysville, PA 15668  
You can contact the office at [office@christsmurrysville.org](mailto:office@christsmurrysville.org)  
or by calling 412-795-1212

*We kindly ask that you continue to pray for our CLC members, family, and friends of members who are included in our weekly bulletin prayer list. Thank you.*

Denise Abrams  
Damian Arenth  
Doug Custer  
Ed Bertesen  
Linda Bradish  
Beth Ann DeSimore  
Irene Evans  
Louise Fitz  
Julie Fallin  
Dan Feibig  
John Heilman  
Linda Hill  
Abby Johnson  
Anthony Johnston

Derek McClemens  
David Little  
John Magnus  
Tony Santacasa  
Vi Shipman  
Pat Sisco  
Patti Smith  
Mary Sorrells  
Wilma Stewart  
Gerry Suter  
Jeff Weber



*In Our  
Thoughts  
and Prayers*

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Please join us in extending the happiest of Birthday Wishes to the following Mission Partners who celebrate Birthdays in the month of **January**:

**Jan 1-9**

Jacob Zimmerman  
Leanne Shick  
Logan Rupert  
Caron Wolfe

Jessica Federovich  
Frieda Cushing  
Walter Luniewski

**Jan 10-13**

Jason Towle  
Carol Hudson  
James McKenzie  
Irene Evans

Peggy Henry  
John Lasher  
Lawrence Potochnik  
Ben Peters

**Jan 15-23**

Noel Kaniecki  
Patricia Plucinski  
Levi Salenske  
Abigail Boyer

Betty Molnar  
Susan Lyons  
Ron Spagna  
Nicole Yankoski

**Jan 25-30**

Joe Bevacqua  
Matthew Sarnowski  
Caroline Howard  
Nancy Sheehan

Scott Ritenbaugh  
John Hall  
Harry Replogle

If you don't see your name, and you have a January birthday, please forgive the oversight and give the church office a call so that we can record your birthdate in our parish records.



Thanks, and have an amazing birthday month!

**Sunday School – A Life-Changing Adventure in Faith**

I planted zucchini seeds every summer when I was growing up. I would carefully turn the soil and plant the seeds in little hills. I would water the seeds for about a week, but then nature took over. The plants grew as they drew nutrients from the soil. I would get excited when I saw orange blossoms. And, shortly after that, I would harvest my first zucchini.

Many parents are concerned about what their teenage and young-adult children believe about God. Christian parents find it hard to watch their children drift away from the Church and, sometimes, even away from God when they go to college. We can't prevent that and sometimes feel that we have failed. Sometimes, the only comfort we can find rests in the fact that we have planted good seeds that God will bless.

Sunday School is a place where seeds are planted. Parents promise to bring their children to worship on the day of their baptism, and they promise to ensure that seeds of faith are planted. We, sometimes, forget that we all make a promise on the day of a baptism. We promise, as individuals and as a congregation, to pray for those who are being baptized and to support them in their life in Christ. Those are big promises! And they are, also, promises that we make in the presence God and before each other. We promise to plant seeds and to ensure that those who are baptized have the chance to know Jesus as they journey through life.

We work together at Christ's Lutheran Church to ensure that seeds are planted, and that people of all ages come to know Jesus. That's our mission! But we

need to work together (Isn't that what being the Church is all about?) to make it happen. We plant seeds when parents or grandparents bring their children to Sunday School, and we plant seeds of faith when adults gather around God's Word in study and in worship. You help us scatter seeds when you volunteer to teach a Sunday School class or to help with a ministry like Vacation Bible School. Planting seeds is something that we do together, and God promises to bless us as we do God's work with our own hands.

I would like to invite you to think more deeply about Sunday School as we enter the new year. We have teachers in place, but we can always use more. We, also, know that there are many young people in our church who will grow up to be strong and faithful Christians as God blesses seeds that we plant in their lives as they grow. Together, we can raise up the next generation of Christians! We can plant seeds that God will water. And, together, we can spread the message of Jesus Christ, so that those who are being raised in these challenging times know that Jesus is always close to them and that they are loved by the God who created them.

Pastor Wayne

**ELCA Colorado Wildfire Appeal**  
(Wording borrowed from the ELCA website)  
**Message from ELCA...**

On Dec. 30, the Marshall Fire ignited in Boulder County, Colo. Over 6,200 acres burned quickly, forcing the evacuations of 35,000 people...

Your gifts will support wildfire survivors. Gifts to "U.S. wildfires" will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by wildfires, until the response is complete. Or make a gift to "Lutheran Disaster Response" so we can respond to disasters whenever and wherever they strike.

Please visit the church website for more information.  
<https://www.christsmurrysville.org/>

**PRAYER CIRCLE**

If you have a prayer request, special concern or a thanksgiving to share, please contact Audrey Ferris, the Prayer Circle coordinator, at: (724) 327-3738 or [audrey.m.ferris@gmail.com](mailto:audrey.m.ferris@gmail.com)

*(Please indicate on the subject line that it relates to the prayer circle).*



**WE PRAY FOR OUR MISSION PARTNERS:**

**January 1<sup>st</sup>**

Marlene Earl  
Janet Eckels  
Arlene Eddy  
Mrs. Charles Evans

**January 9**

Mr. Roger Fairbank  
Bill Farrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Federovich  
Matthew Federovich

**January 16<sup>th</sup>**

Audrey Ferris  
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Ferris  
Louise Fitz  
Mrs. Gloria Frick

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Ronald Fuehrer  
Marlene Gerdes  
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Gestrich  
Pastor Wayne & Laurel Gillespie

**January 30<sup>th</sup>**

Eric Gipson & Amy Lederer  
Ruth Goetz  
Elizabeth Goughnour  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Grabowski Jr.



**Support Team Updates:**

During our Livestream, you may have noticed that the camera faces the right side of the congregation during Communion. We want to remind you that if you are uncomfortable being on camera, please feel free to take Communion on the left side.

The Tech Team Needs You! We are asking for volunteers to join the Tech Team! Our greatest need right now is for camera operators for the live stream. Rest assured, this is an easy task and we will train you on how to properly work the camera. We are also looking for anyone with skills related to networking, social media, web design, and general computer skills or knowledge. Any amount of time you can volunteer is welcome.

The Support Team is looking for Volunteers! What does the Support team do? Basically, anything related to the general operations of the Church would be considered "Support." Whether it's the property committee (pulling weeds, checking the lights in parking lot etc). or the Endowment Fund Committee or Memorial Committee, or Tech Team, we can use your help! There is no task too great or too small. All are welcome!

Our Church Council needs you. Currently, we have 8 members on the council. We cannot run our Council meetings with any less than 8. Please consider helping.

If you would like to Volunteer your time, please contact Joe Kelly [joekelly567@gmail.com](mailto:joekelly567@gmail.com) 412-999-6060, or or Linda Paulovich [lindajeangepaul@aol.com](mailto:lindajeangepaul@aol.com) 412-525-5619.

All of our Teams are looking for Volunteers as well! If your skills are more in Congregational Life, or Outreach, please let us know!

## *Have you been getting all of our emails?*

As you may know, our Church Council, along with Pastor Wayne, has been working diligently to stay in communication with our Members and Ministry Partners. Currently, our live Zoom service has been working well and we want to be sure that you are getting all our emails about these services. We also will be streaming live from YouTube, as well as resuming our 10 am Sunday Morning Worship Service.

We are reaching out to you for help. If you haven't been receiving our emails, they may be landing in your PROMOTIONS/SPAM/JUNK email folder. Please search your mailbox for emails coming from [office@christsmurrysville.org](mailto:office@christsmurrysville.org) To adjust your settings, go to the end of the email and click on the link to "Add us to your address book."

Please use the following updated link to connect to our weekly e-Newsletter, and to find important announcements and information about our ongoing ministry.

<https://prezi.com/view/Zd1LlveQHzIMT6Rb0ebY/>

**If you would like to connect to the online streaming via YOUTUBE, please email [office@christsmurrysville.org](mailto:office@christsmurrysville.org) with your email so we can send you the link.**