

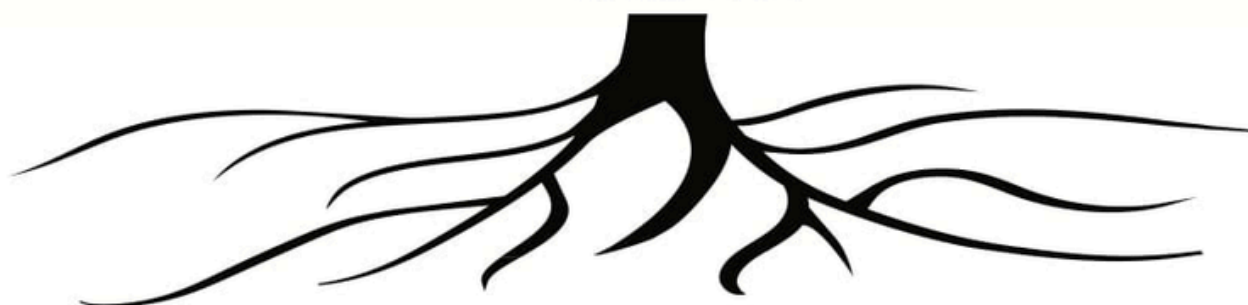


ST. PETER
LUTHERAN CHURCH



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5.22-23



Fall 2026

Dear Church,

There is something about fall that gathers us in. We get back to routines and calendars full of good things. Summer has its own gift with the looser rhythm, the travel, and one service where the whole church sits together in a single full room. But I'm ready for the rhythm of fall.

Beginning September 6, we return to our full program-year schedule: worship at 8:00 and 10:45, with Wee Worship at 9:00 for our youngest worshipers and the grown-ups who bring them. Three services full of the same Spirit. Come to the one that fits your life, and know you're welcome at any of them.

This fall season carries two of the year's great days. On Reformation Sunday, October 25, we'll wear red and sing loudly and remember that a reforming church is always reforming. On All Saints Sunday, November 1 — All Saints Day itself, this year — we'll remember aloud the names of those we've lost and trust the promise of the resurrection.

Then on November 8, we gather differently: one service only, at 9:30, followed by our Congregational Meeting. Please make the change on your calendar now. That morning we'll also conclude our fall stewardship season together. You'll be hearing more about this campaign soon.

There's more in these pages than fall dates. Turn ahead for a look back at Vacation Bible School. You'll also find an article from beyond our walls about the ministry taking root in our community garden, and everything you need to know about this year's CROP Walk, including how to join our team and how to support the walkers.

Whatever this fall asks of you, there is room for you in all that's going on here at church. I look forward to seeing you for worship, for the great church festivals and the ordinary Sundays, for fellowship and stewardship.

In Christ,
Pastor Alex

Mechanicsburg Church Gardens To Feed the Hungry

Mary Klaus, Correspondent, Lancaster Farming

Jul 27, 2026

Paul Wesley Bowers squinted in the bright sunlight, dug a small hole and gently lifted a small oregano plant into it.

Under the watchful eyes of his mentor, he covered it with soil, dug more holes and planted everything from basil to rosemary in the St. Peter Lutheran Church Community Garden.

Like the 8-year-old boy he is and the mature gardener he is becoming, he discussed the joys of gardening.

“I’ve learned you have to be careful when you’re getting plants out of the pots,” he said, demonstrating the gentle tap it takes to help a plant plop out into his hand.

“I like planting, watching the plants grow bigger and even weeding,” Paul Wesley said. “At home, I have strawberries, blueberries, peppers and tomatoes in our garden. I got one strawberry from my plants and it was delicious.”



The community garden, located behind St. Peter Lutheran Church on its former ball field, began more than a decade ago when a congregation member planned a “city garden” on a 25-by-50-foot plot. Vegetables were grown and donated to a local food pantry.



In 2021, the church received a \$15,000 grant from the Lower Susquehanna World Hunger Legacy program. With that money, the garden crew brought in a tractor to prepare the 100-by-60-foot plot for planting. They named that plot the community garden.

The grant also went to digging a well for sustainable access to water and buying irrigation equipment and fencing supplies. Church members began planting in the spring of 2022.

Clyde Forbes, church member, retired Carlisle School District geography teacher and a Cumberland County master gardener, runs the program.

He said half of the garden area was designated for New Hope Ministries Food Pantry and the other half was divided into individual plots for church members, community members and the church preschool.

After launching the community garden with a garden party, the congregation came together to weed, water and wait.

Since its inception, the garden proved to be productive. Church members harvested 4,016 pounds of produce in 2022; 2,300 pounds in 2023; 3,100 pounds in 2024; and 2,400 pounds in 2025.

Forbes attributed seasons of decreased production to droughts during the growing season.

“Even though we have drip irrigation with a well, we couldn’t put out all the water our plants needed,” he said.

Abby Best, food program manager at the New Hope Ministries Mechanicsburg Center, called the garden a blessing. New Hope Ministries provides food and other assistance to people at nine centers, including the one in the Mechanicsburg area.

“Having fresh produce to feed families is beneficial to our guests,” Best said. “Canned goods are nice, but fresh produce is a good healthy choice.”

Best said New Hope appreciates all the hard work Forbes and his volunteers do. She noted their creativity in growing and selling lavender, giving the proceeds to New Hope.

The Rev. Alex Martini, St. Peter pastor, said that the garden project has been good for his members. “This project means so much to our congregation,” Martini said. “It brings alive Jesus’ command to feed the hungry. People are connected to the garden they created and are exposed to the needs of our community.”

The pastor said a “beautiful thing” happened in the individual plots.

“We started looking out for each other,” he said. “If my neighbor’s plot looked dry when I was watering my plot, I watered theirs too. I relied on others to pick my tomatoes when I went away for a week during peak tomato harvest time. We gave each other tips and tricks.”

A fun part of the garden is the “pizza garden,” a round area marked off like slices of pizza. Each slice contains popular pizza ingredients ranging from parsley to oregano to onions.



The garden area also hosts a high tunnel built by Forbes and his fellow volunteers, using money from a \$5,000 grant from the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia.

High tunnels, sometimes called hoop gardens, are unheated covered structures which look like a cross between a greenhouse and a Quonset hut (developed by the Navy during WWII).

With wood and steel aluminum pipes for the frame and plastic sheets for the covering, the St. Peter 16-by-24-foot high tunnel extends the growing season in a natural way. Sun provides heat and light while the volunteers carry water to the plants.

“We produce lettuce, spinach and bok choy in March and April,” Forbes said. “We started our tomatoes from seed in February and March and picked tomatoes in June.”

The garden contains plenty of plants common in backyard gardens including carrots, peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, potatoes, squash, onions, green and yellow beans, lettuce, cabbage, basil, oregano, rosemary, eggplant and strawberries.

The garden also hosts unusual plants such as kohlrabi, an alien-looking vegetable which tastes like a cross between cabbage, broccoli and kale; wheat used to make communion bread; loofah, a gourd family member used as rough sponges; and borders of lavender plants for their calming benefit in essential oil and culinary uses like tea, lemonade and even shortbread.

President's Corner

Council had a little break this summer without our July meeting, but August presented us with a full agenda of exciting things to look forward to.

Dory and Steve Kessler have some wonderful plans for our Stewardship Program for the rest of the year. You will hear stories of the importance of being an active part of our church and the effect this has on some of our members. More information will come from them.

We are happy to announce that David Binkley's contract as our interim organist has been extended to the end of the year. As we develop the 2027 Congregation Budget, we have an opportunity to extend that contract even further.

Our Annual Congregation Meeting will be here before we know it! In addition to the Budget planning, we will also be looking for candidates for Council for 3-year terms. If you are approached, please prayerfully consider accepting the call to serve. And if you have found it in your heart to do this kind of work, please speak to a council member, and they will pass this on to the Nominating Committee.

Council is taking part in a Facilities Self-Assessment which is looking at how our building and grounds are serving our ministry today. The idea is to allow our strengths to surface and to identify areas that may need care. Results of this study will be shared with the congregation as they develop.

Every other year our Lower Susquehanna Synod updates the model constitution for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations. Our congregation had our last update in 2021, so we needed to do the difficult job of inserting those changes in our constitution/bylaws and continuing resolutions document. This work was done by Pam Ringhoffer and Karl Segletes and approved by council in August. Now it will be up to the congregation to make the final approval. It will be on the agenda for the November Annual Congregation Meeting. Copies of the changes will be sent to all members 60 days before that meeting.

Priss Bashore

Worship & Music

Summer is coming to an end, and fall activities are starting to take their place. What new things are you adding to your schedule?

- school for your children/grandchildren along with fall sport games, band, and music lessons
- harvesting the last of your garden's bounty
- putting away outdoor furniture
- raking leaves and preparing some gardens for next growing season
- worship service schedule changes
- return of the choir to the Chancel
- restart of Sunday School

Since this message comes from Worship and Music, you might expect the last three activities to be listed first. But sometimes, what we hear last sticks with us the most. I hope you remember those last three.

Hopefully, you will remember that services resume at 8 AM and 10:45 AM, with Wee Worship at 9 AM, on September 6th. Hopefully, you will remember we need ushers, lectors, liturgists, acolytes, and altar volunteers. Hopefully, you will remember that everyone who wants to sing praises to our Lord in the choir can rehearse on Thursday evenings at 7 PM and sing during the 10:45 AM service on Sundays. Hopefully, those of you who want to participate in Bells will remember to rehearse on Thursdays at 6 PM. Hopefully, you will remember that all are welcome to Sunday School, both children's and adult Sunday School. The children's Sunday School starts at 9:30 AM after Wee Worship, and Adult Sunday School starts at 9:15 AM.

Hopefully, you will find an activity here to add to your fall schedule. See you soon.

Susan Hensel

Hope Academy

Thank you, thank you, St Peter congregation, for all the support that you give to Hope Academy. It is sincerely appreciated. Hope Academy has grown from about 20 girls when it began in 2019 to about 120 girls. Many of these girls would not be able to attend if it were not for the generosity of so many of you. Student sponsorship not only covers the cost of the teachers' salaries but also includes student uniforms, nutritious lunches prepared by a dietician, a school psychologist, a music teacher, and transportation. All of the students are transported by van either to the orphanage or one of the villages. Over the last couple of years, the cost of transportation and teacher salaries has greatly increased. Over the last five years, the governor has mandated an increase in teacher salaries each year, which adds up to about a twenty percent increase in salaries over what they were originally paid.

When Hope Academy was first constructed, finances only enabled them to build one level. But when they built, they implanted girders that would enable them to eventually add a second floor. Once the first floor was completed, they immediately began fundraising for the second floor. Two-thirds of the second floor is now complete. There are two classrooms, a music room, a counselor's office, a teacher planning room, and a restroom. Last year, they started moving students into these classrooms. This year, while I visited, there was the dedication of these rooms. There was a great celebration with singing, praying, unveiling of plaques, and speeches by some of the major benefactors.

That still leaves one-third of the second floor to be completed. The vision for these additional rooms is to extend the school to include 7th and 8th grades. This is being considered because of the difficulty some of the girls have transitioning from the safe nurturing environment of Hope Academy to the more impersonal and intimidating environment of the public school.

This fall, Tree for Hope will begin another major fundraising campaign to raise capital to enable them to complete the second-floor classrooms. Carol Forbes will be able to keep you updated on any and all opportunities you may have to support this project.

Thank you to all of you who have invested in the lives of these girls. Thank you for all you are doing to make a specific impact where it is greatly appreciated.

Cindy Jones

ELCW News

Please join us at 9:30 for breakfast at Cafe100 for our upcoming meetings and presentations.

- September 23 - William Murray, archivist for Mechanicsburg School District
- October 28 - Annette Doland, healing oils for pain and memory
- November 18 - Jean and Kevin McArdle, Honor Flights

All are welcome.

Mission Central Volunteer Days



St Peter is excited to partner with Mission Central in Mechanicsburg to help "Connect God's Resources to Human Need", which is Mission Central's slogan. The next volunteer day is Monday, October 26, from 12:15 - 2:45 PM. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up! You can also help by donating items for their different programs. The three most needed items are these school supplies: pencils, children's scissors, and notebooks.

[Sign up here for October 26](#)



Come, "pray with your feet" and "walk your values" at the
Mechanicsburg/West Shore CROP Hunger 5K Walk/Run



to benefit
New Hope Ministries,
Mechanicsburg Area
Meals on Wheels and
the global relief efforts
of Church World
Service

Sun., Oct. 18, 2026

Memorial Park, 1 Memorial Park Dr.,
Mechanicsburg, PA

1:00PM Registration 1:20PM Team Pics
1:50PM Kick-Off 2:00PM Walk/Run Starts

Register online & donate by Sept. 25th and receive a CROP Walk T-shirt.
Strollers & Leashed Dogs Welcome Live DJ Refreshments afterwards

There is no cost to walk but **generous donations to CWS/CROP are invited to help us reach the \$50,000 goal!** Since 1971, the Mechanicsburg/West Shore CROP Hunger walk has raised over **\$727,730** to feed the poor.



Use the **link** below or the **QR code** to make a donation, register or sponsor a walker/runner.

You may also register the day of the walk.

<https://crophungerwalk.org/mechanicsburgpa>

Find us on Facebook: **CROP Hunger Walk – Mechanicsburg/West Shore**

For more info, contact:

Ulli Klemm

ulliklemm@yahoo.com 724.464.8748



Join us as we "**Believe There is Good in the World.**"

Hoss's Community Day to benefit the CROP

Hunger Walk: **Thurs., Sept. 17, 2026**

61 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg PA 17055



Present a copy of this flyer when ordering lunch, dinner or a take-out on Sept. 17, 2026, and Hoss's Mechanicsburg will donate up to 25% of your total check to feed the hungry. **Group # 133543.** Complete the CROP Walk Activity Page and spin to win a prize!

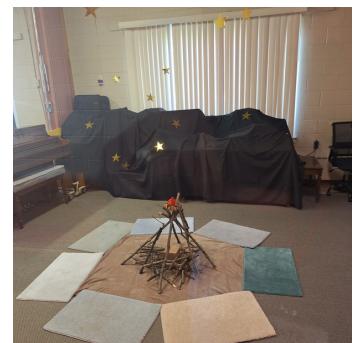


Gather Around God's Campfire!



VBS 2026

On July 13th – 16th, twenty-four volunteers and an enthusiastic group of youngsters braved the heat and the early hours to participate in St. Peter's Vacation Bible School. The theme this year was Gather Around God's Campfire. Out of 39 registered, 33 showed up. For our benevolence, the families generously donated 150 lbs. of food to New Hope and 180 lbs. of clothes to Community Aid. We danced and sang in the pews for opening and closing. Lily Bechard won the coveted award for having the wackiest outfit on Wacky Wednesday, and as usual, the Phillys won on Sport Jersey Day. Bill Laubenheimer (who is my best friend and partner in life) couldn't be with us on Tuesday, but Craig Nelson, Pastor Alex, and Faith Klemick filled in for him. For the past 2 years, we have been splitting up the music station. This year, Pastor Alex led on Monday, Ryan Klemick on Tuesday, Faith Klemick on Wednesday, and Priss Bashore on Thursday. It was Ryan's first time as a station leader, and he did a great job. Faith made a campfire to sit around in the music room, and Stacey Niedzwiecki hung the stars from the ceiling. On Thursday, Priss Bashore came in and played the ukulele while she taught the kids "Every Promise in the Book is Mine". I hope you enjoyed our rendition. We sang it joyfully and added kazoos on Sunday, July 19 during the 9:30 AM service. All the station leaders were creative. In Bible Story Time and Crafts, Susan Hensel and Leisa Barry asked the children to blow their horns, and the walls came tumbling down. It was hot. It is always hot during the week of VBS. Sarah Bowers and Stacie Witmer ran water games to cool the kids off, and they were drenched. They had so much fun throwing water balloons and soaking Ryan. For a snack, Marlene Bohr served ice cream and ice pops. Everyone was thrilled, including the helpers and remaining station leaders. I can't give the adult and youth helpers enough accolades. They help the station leaders when necessary and are good with the kids. They are kind, caring, patient, and loving. I saw children sitting on helpers' laps and plenty of hugs all around. The following are the adult and youth helpers: Mary Ann Charles, Faith Klemick, Ryan Klemick, Audrey Klemick, Lydia Martini, Molly Witmer, Ella Bechard, Pam Ringhoffer, Joyce Bowers, Mary Jane Steinhart, Connie Kishbaugh, Dottie Shultz, Carol Forbes, Jean McArdle, Jim MacGregor, and Pat Plummer. There was preparation before the week of VBS, and Kathy Zagoric and Lora Sisock were very helpful. Finally, let me say that many people helped with set up and take down as well. I don't know who they all are because I was busy setting up and taking down the sanctuary. You know who you are, and I thank God for you.



Clare Laubenheimer
VBS Coordinator

Life Together

Stewardship

This fall you'll have the chance to upgrade your current membership to an exciting new level of involvement! Our Stewardship Campaign is in the works! Be on the lookout for a variety of opportunities to share the word of Jesus with joy and love.

You'll find a pretty big hint to our Stewardship theme for this year somewhere in this Scroll.

Chili Cookoff



Mark your calendars! The Fellowship Committee will be hosting our 2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off after the 9:30 service and congregational meeting on November 8th. Sign up sheets will be in the hallway. We are limiting the number of entries to 8 this year, due to limited space and electrical outlets. So, if you want to challenge our reigning champion, Gloria Moyer, with your best chili...sign up early! OR, bring a side dish or dessert to share. The committee will be providing beverages.

Ham Dinner



Please join the Fellowship Committee for our annual Ham Dinner, Tree Trim and Hymn Sing, Wednesday, December 2nd at 6 PM. We will provide the ham and the beverages. Please sign up in the hallway to bring a side or dessert. If you have never been to this special event, I highly encourage you to join us, and make sure you stay until the end when we hold hands around the sanctuary and sing Silent Night. It is very moving.



Sunday Fellowship

Summer is over, and we have returned to 2 services every Sunday. 2nd Sunday Fellowship will be from 9 AM to 10:30 AM on **September 13, October 11**. Join us in the Fellowship Hall to visit with new and longtime friends and enjoy a snack and beverage.

November 8, we will have a Chili Cook-Off following the Congregation meeting instead of the 2nd Sunday Fellowship. Contact Dottie Shultz with any questions.

Life Together

Outdoor Ministry this Summer

Notice any familiar faces (or t-shirts)? Many of our youth, young adults, staff, and families had wonderful summers at Camps Kirchenwald, Nawakwa, and the Wittel Farm. Thanks be to God for the ministry of the Lutheran Camping Corporation!



Menu:

Pancakes
Sausage Links
Scrambled Eggs
Fruit Cups
Coffee, Tea, Milk
Orange Juice, Apple Juice

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

**Saturday, October 10, 2026
8:00 – 11:00AM**

Shepherdstown United Methodist Church
1934 S. York St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(Fellowship Hall)

**100% of the donations will be given to
Mechanicsburg/West Shore
CROP Hunger Walk**

Financial Snapshot

July '26		YTD	
Income	18,019.78	Income	169,409.18
Expenses	23,631.02	Expenses	171,348.01
Net Income	-5,611.24	Net Income	-1,938.83

Anniversary Blessings!

September 1 - Brook & Deidre Lenker
 September 3 - Jereme & Stephanie Gross
 September 10 - Ken & Ashleigh Bailey
 September 10 - Bob & Kim Eichinger
 September 21 - Bob & Dottie Shultz
 September 28 - Rich & Anne Harner

October 6 - Ed & Kathy Zagoric
 October 11 - Logan & Brooke Zagoric
 October 22 - Creedin & Jo Ann Paulus
 October 31 - Rick & Bonnie Allen

November 2 - Dick & Diane Smith
 November 20 - Jonathan & Madison Ernst
 November 28 - Bill & Sondra Bowen



Birthday Blessings!



September 1 - Lily Reinhart
 September 2 - Dick Smith
 September 5 - Jo Ann Paulus
 September 6 - Ted Christiansen
 September 6 - Audrey Klemick
 September 10 - Becky Fenstermacher
 September 10 - Elizabeth Montgomery
 September 10 - Pam Ringhoffer
 September 12 - Doug Stevenson
 September 15 - Tori Pironti
 September 16 - Jean McArdle
 September 18 - Kameron Bailey
 September 18 - Jill Bashore
 September 18 - Marianna Heeter
 September 19 - Lily Pennington
 September 19 - Jonah Savant
 September 20 - Jason Sisock
 September 21 - Sunny Bogdan
 September 25 - Savanna Gross
 September 26 - Patrick Curran
 September 26 - Lydia Martini
 September 30 - Marlene Bohr
 September 30 - Caitlyn Pepper

October 2 - Ryan Montgomery
 October 6 - Justin Gasswint
 October 7 - Helena Kuivaniemi
 October 10 - Annette McAlister
 October 10 - Melissa McCord
 October 10 - Brian Pennington
 October 13 - Joyce Chronister
 October 13 - David Ross
 October 13 - Bob Shultz
 October 15 - Dave Keeny
 October 15 - Kai Weiss
 October 17 - Cindy Krissinger
 October 17 - David Reinhart
 October 18 - Laurie Hoover
 October 19 - Joanne Keeny
 October 19 - Maddie Pepper
 October 20 - Jim Maxwell
 October 22 - Rex Carmichael
 October 30 - Susan Niedzwiecki
 October 31 - Henry Barry

November 2 - Susan Hensel
 November 4 - Brian Speck
 November 5 - Cheryl Graybill
 November 6 - Dory Kessler
 November 7 - Lora Bueno
 November 7 - Lucas Manzullo-Thomas
 November 7 - Brynn Noss
 November 8 - Rena Rinehart
 November 10 - Gary Fenstermacher
 November 11 - Karl Segletes
 November 15 - William Bailey
 November 15 - Brenda Long
 November 15 - Jacey Ross
 November 17 - Matt Grobinski
 November 18 - Clyde Forbes
 November 19 - Leisa Barry
 November 20 - Phil Klemick
 November 21 - Jereme Gross
 November 28 - Eileen O'Sullivan
 November 28 - Denise Roth
 November 29 - Craig Forbes
 November 29 - Susan Mumma

Galatians 5:22
Love Gentleness
Joy FAITHFULNESS
Peace Goodness
 Patience **Kindness**
 Self-Control





**130 Nittany Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055**

St. Peter Lutheran Church

(717) 766-2701

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM

www.stpetermechanicsburg.com

facebook.com/saintpeterlutheranchurch

instagram.com/st.peteryg

youtube.com/@st.petermechanicsburg6351

**8:00 AM and 10:45 AM Worship
Wee Worship 9:00 AM**