

the Messenger



January 2024
Epiphany



To read the Messenger [online](#), scan this code with your phone or visit godslovenewtown.org/connect/newsletters.



Find all the signups at the [SignUp Hub](#) in the Commons or [online](#) at godslovenewtown.org/signups.



Is this the century of the Holy Spirit?

Some scholars have suggested that the 21st century provides a unique opportunity to grow in our understanding and experience of the Spirit of our Triune God.

In the beginning, God's spirit moved over the deep forming our world. Jesus promised to send his disciples the Spirit, the Advocate to teach them everything and remind them of all that he said. And on Pentecost, those first disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Young and old received visions. Rich and the poor

prophesied the Good News of God's love. The Spirit moves creating and re-creating God's vision of grace through the lives of God's people and in our communities.

The Spirit continues to move here at God's Love. Saturday, December 30, my family, and I joined many who gathered for our in-person *AHTN Shared Meal*. We enjoyed Christian fellowship as we accompanied our brothers and sisters experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.

This January our *Men's Monthly Bible Study* returns under the new leadership of **Ken Weisensale**, **Lary Whelan** and **Brian Parker**.

Our *Adult Life and Faith Formation Team* begin a new three-part series exploring the Doctrine of Discovery and paths towards honoring indigenous peoples.

Confirmation/youth and Sunday school ministries continue to thrive as they prepare for our upcoming *Children's Worship*.

There are many opportunities for fellowship and small group gathering. I encourage you to check out the Messenger for more information.

Lastly, our church council has been faithfully planning for our *Annual Congregational Meeting*. Yes, indeed, the Holy Spirit is moving, creating, and re-creating as we begin a new year in ministry. I encourage you to attend worship **Sunday, January 28 at 9:30am** and participate in the *Annual Congregational Meeting* immediately following.

The Holy Spirit is moving. Come and see where the Spirit might lead you next.

Your sister in Christ, *Pastor Brandi*



ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 28, 2024

NOTE: ONE Worship Service at 9:30am

Meeting Begins at 10:45am

Business items will include election of council members and approval of the 2024 budget. All chairpersons, coordinators of ministries, and staff are asked to submit a short article describing their activities in 2023. Reports are due to the church office **by Noon on January 8**.

Once compiled into a booklet, these reports will be ready for the congregation to review **by Sunday, January 22**.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Event

Sunday, January 14 • 10:00am

Fellowship Hall

All are invited to join the Sunday School children and their families for this service event. The group will be making meals for *Caring for Friends*, an organization that serves homebound folks in the five-county region.

We will also be decorating drawstring backpacks to share with youth in foster care at *Valley Youth House*.

What a perfect way to serve God and celebrate the life and legacy of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



Highlighted Collection for January: *Blessing Bags*

January's collection is "Blessing Bags" which will be distributed at our AHTN shared meals throughout the year.



In the **Lobby of Love** ♥ there are drawstring backpacks. Inside each backpack list of personal care items. Please take a bag or more than one if you would like, and fill with the items on the list. Return the bag to the **Lobby of Love** ♥ by **January 28**.

These simple items (toothpaste, chapstick, deodorant, first aid supplies, razors, shaving cream, comb/brush, and hand sanitizer) that most of us take for granted mean the world to the people experiencing homelessness. Let's show kindness to those in need!

Questions? Please contact **Valerie Greaud**.

Community Worship Honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Monday, January 15, 2024
6:00pm Panel Discussion • 7:00pm Worship
Macedonia Baptist Church
218 North State Street, Newtown



Preacher:
Pastor Cedric Hughes Jones, Jr.
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Philadelphia, PA

This event is sponsored by
Macedonia Baptist and the
Newtown-Yardley Ministerium.



"Honoring Indigenous Peoples"

Sundays at 10:00am • Fellowship Hall
January 14 will be held in Room A1/A2

- **January 7:** **Guest Speaker Mary Lee Reiff** from ANA (Americans for Native Americans), a non-profit organization in Doylestown dedicated to improving the quality of life for Native Americans in the southwest.
- **January 14:** **"The Role of the Church"** an exploration of the church's past complicity in the conquest and colonization of Native Americans and ELCA's present commitment to their communities, including the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.
- **January 21:** **"A Matter of Faith"** an exploration of possible next steps including land acknowledgements, education, and advocacy.

HOPE Supporting Those in Need

Winter is hard on those who are homeless. At least we can take the worry out of finding food.

God's Love provides lunches every week to the *Reach Out Foundation* in Pennel.



[SIGNUP for JANUARY](#) or [SIGNUP for FEBRUARY](#), or visit the **SignUp Hub**, to choose a week to provide an item(s) for the Tuesday bagged lunches. **NOTE:** There is bologna, pre-portioned, in the freezer in the church kitchen. Each bag includes enough lunch meat to make the 25 sandwiches needed.

Donations due in the **Lobby of Love** ♥
Tuesdays by 10:30am.

Questions? **Sandy Anthony.**

For the month of January, the "on-loan" materials on the *Ministry Resource Table* correspond to the Adult Faith & Life emphasis on *Honoring Indigenous Peoples*. There are novels, non-fiction accounts, and theological papers on the true history and current realities of Indigenous people, the Doctrine of Discovery, and the church's work toward truth and healing. **Welcome!**



God's Caring Stitchers

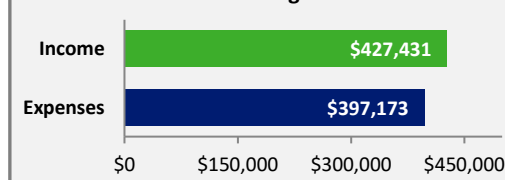
January 19 • 1:00pm • Room A1/A2

Are looking for a new craft, something to do with your hands? Why not start the

new year learning to knit or crochet with our group. We supply the yarn, patterns, and support along the way. Learn the joy and satisfaction of making something for others.

Questions? Contact **Cindy Sundstrom.**

Financials through November 2023



Questions? Contact Treasurer, **Bob Smoose**, or Financial Secretary, **John Tidd**.

Ways you can SERVE

**Usher, Reader, Altar Guild, Acolyte,
Communion Assistant, Basket Bearer**

There are many opportunities for adults and youth to assist during worship services. Any of these roles are wonderful opportunities to engage in service, meet new people, and deepen your own worship experience.

[SIGN UP JANUARY/FEBRUARY](#), or visit the **SignUp Hub** to choose weeks and roles convenient for you.

AHTN Shared Meal *Follow Up*

What a great way to close 2023 and get excited about what we can do with God in 2024! On December 30, at least **47 guests** came in on a cold night and left with bellies full of nutritious food and treats lovingly prepared and served.

Thank you to **over 20 volunteers** who took on the task of welcoming our neighbors. A special shout out to the Parker, Hebert, and Dunkerley kids who carried out their jobs and interacted with our guests like pros. It was so nice to have Pastor's parents join us.

Our next Shared Meal will be **Saturday, March 30.**



Happy New Year! We are excited to be back in school after a wonderful Christmas break. In January, the preschoolers' lessons will focus on winter, snowmen, what animals do in cold weather, and Martin Luther King and his Christian message of love for all people.

The preschool has adopted a new logo.

Many thanks to **Kathy MacDonald** and **Lee Eschliman** (teacher Marylynn Eschliman's husband) for bringing this new look to life. Look for new signage in the coming weeks!

All of us at the preschool wish the entire congregation good health, happiness, and blessings in 2024!

preschool registration



Preschool registration for 2024 – 2025 has begun!

We offer classes for 3s, 4s, as well as a 2-by-2s class for 2-year-olds with an adult.

Information and registration forms are available at godslovenewtown.org/preschool. Click "Contact the Preschool" to complete a registration form. **Questions?** Contact **Nikki Hendricks** at preschool@godslovenewtown.org or 215-497-0506.

- **Emergency Relief Association** thanks us for 438 pounds of food delivered during the 4th quarter of 2023.
- On behalf of **Mercer Street Friends**, please accept our sincerest gratitude for your Thanksgiving offering of \$562.50. We continue to work side by side with our neighbors in Trenton and throughout Mercer County to ensure that the most basic human needs are addressed.
- Thank you for your gracious gift to **Philly House!** Your Thanksgiving offering [of \$562.50] will help provide a warm delicious meal, a peaceful sleep, and the reminder of the hope of Jesus to who join us.
- **The Interfaith Food Alliance and The Family Backpack Center** thank you for your donation and support of \$500. [Special appeal to fill their bare pantry shelves approved by Executive Committee on November 9, 2023].



- **The ELCA's Director of Congregational Generosity** sent two letters thanking the congregation for:
 - A gift of \$1,690 for Lutheran Disaster Response toward relief in Ukraine [from the congregation's Easter/Lent offerings].
 - A gift of \$200 for Lutheran Disaster Response with no special designation [from the congregation's Christmas in July collection].
- **The Executive Director of Bear Creek Camp:** Thank you for your generous support of our Giving Tuesday project. Because of you, campers will have more opportunities than ever to grow in self-confidence, build trust with their peers, and have fun on the high ropes course. We hope to see some of your youth using it this summer! [council approved \$500 on November 23, 2023].
- On behalf of **Reach Out Foundation of Bucks County**, I extend my deepest gratitude for your weekly donations of food and clothing. Thank you for being a loyal community partner. Our mission is to provide support for individuals with mental illness, addiction disorders, and/or homelessness [from Douglas Hicks, Executive Director].

Men's Bible Study Resumes

Monday, January 22 • 7:00pm • the Lounge



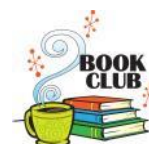
Men of all ages are invited to attend. We will begin the study of the Gospel of Mark, including an overview plus Chapters 1 – 3. We'll also discuss options for future meeting dates and times. **Questions?** Contact **Ken Weisensale**.

Gals' Book Club

Thursday, January 25 • 7:00pm • the Lounge

"Glory Over Everything"
by Kathleen Grissom

Newcomers are always welcome, (even if you didn't finish the book!)
Questions? Contact **Sharon Sottung**.





Predictions for the New Year

Author Ronald Wilson, in *Stretching the Soul*, describes being certain that four things will occur in the days ahead.

1. Trouble will come. Life is difficult. I must mourn as well as dance.
2. In this long journey [of life], I'm not in control. God has reminded us of this.
3. Many times I will fail.
4. I will find forgiveness and get up and go on. God will wipe up the mess I've made of things, take me by the hand and set me back on the right path.

Praise God for his sure presence during the joys and challenges the new year brings!

If inclement weather forces a change in worship schedule or church events, we will do our best to get the word out as early and efficiently as possible.



Sunday morning changes will be **announced by 7:30am.**



Please watch your **email** and the **church website** godslovenewtown.org and the church **Facebook page** for announcements about possible cancellations or schedule changes. If no announcement is made, we will operate as planned.

As always, use your own judgement in determining whether to travel to church. Your safety and comfort are the priority! If you do choose to stay at home, remember that online worship is available weekly at godslovenewtown.org/worship/.



2024 Altar Flower Dedications

The Altar Flowers can be dedicated on any Sunday in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a special occasion. The *requested donation* is **\$50** per dedication; payable to Lutheran Church of God's Love. [CLICK HERE](#) or visit the **SignUp Hub** to select a week(s).

January 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2 Counters 9:30a Staff Meeting 11a Rejoice! 7:30p	3 Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	4 Church Council 7p	5 Knit & Crochet 1p	6 Fellowship Dine Out 6:30p
7 Worship 8:45a Education 10a Worship 11a	8 Counters 9:30a	9 Staff Meeting 10a Rejoice! 7:30p	10 Adult Ed Mtg 10a Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	11 Musicians' Mtg 11a Exec Comm 7:30p	12	13 Quilters in Mods 10a – 3p
14 Worship 8:45a Education/MLK project 10a Worship 11a	15 OFFICE CLOSED  MLK worship at Macedonia Baptist 7p	16 Counters 9:30a Invest Comm 9:30a Staff Meeting 10a Mutual Min 7:30p Rejoice! 7:30p	17 Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	18 Church Council 7p	19 Knit & Crochet 1p	20 Newtown Chamber Orchestra -Soloists on Stage 7:00p
21 Worship 8:45a Education 10a Worship 11a	22 Counters 9:30a TLC Mtg 11a Men's Bible Study 7p	23 Staff Meeting 10a Property Team 1p Rejoice! 7:30p	24 Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	25 Gals' Book Club 7p	26	27
28 ONE Worship at 9:30a NO Education  ANNUAL MEETING 10:45a	29 Counters 9:30a	30 Staff Meeting 10a Rejoice! 7:30p	31 Bell Choir 6:30p Vocal Choir 7:30p	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sometimes Overlooked Blessings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A call from someone just to say "I love you." • Sheets dried in the sun. • Someone saying you did a good job. • Unconditional love. • Your dog's welcoming bark as you turn your key in the door. 		



Lutheran Church of God's Love
791 Newtown-Yardley Road
Newtown, PA 18940
215.968.4335 • godslovenewtown.org

Pastor Brandi Hebert
prbrandi@godslovenewtown.org

Kay Rozolis
admin@godslovenewtown.org

Susan McDonnell
info@godslovenewtown.org