November 2026
Monthly Newsletter of Nativity Lutheran Church

Shared Life Newsletter

FROM PASTOR'S HEART

November is a month when people tend to reflect on the things they are thankful for, usually around the Thanksgiving dinner table with loved ones. It is good to be thankful. Scripture tells us: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Take a moment to really notice what this verse says: "Give thanks in ALL circumstances." This means giving thanks even during those times when life isn't going as we planned or when something bad happens. We all know that bad things happen in life. People get sick, things break or get stolen, feelings get hurt by those we call friends, and relationships go through difficult times. It may be challenging to see these as times to give thanks, but they are.

Now, take notice of the word that comes before ALL. We are encouraged to give thanks IN all circumstances, not FOR all circumstances. The evil in this world and the hardships we experience in life do not come from God; rather, they are a result of sin in the world. This is why we are not thankful FOR all circumstances. We are thankful IN all circumstances because, no matter what we are facing in life, God is still in control, and God's presence is always with us.

Continued on page 2...

NOVEMBER DATES

Nov 1 All Saints Day
Nov 3 Election Day
Nov 10 Worship & Music Mtg
Nov 11 Veterans Day
Nov 12 Council Mtg
Nov 14 Friendsgiving Dinner
Nov 15 Faith Formation Lunch
Nov 22 Christ the King Sunday
Nov 23-27 National Bible Week
Nov 22 Christ the King Sunday Greening of the Church
Nov 26 Thanksgiving Day
Nov 29 First Sunday of Advent

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever."

(Psalm 107:1)

This means that God's love, mercy, compassion, and all the other wonderful things God is and does are still with you. They are with you because you are God's dearly beloved child. This promise is revealed so profoundly through God sending Jesus, God's only Son, so that anyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.

As we take time to reflect on what we are thankful for, we ought to give our ultimate gratitude for the gift of Jesus—for His death and resurrection. It is through this gift that we are claimed as God's beloved children. I am thankful that God continues to walk with us wherever we may go. My prayer is that, no matter what you experience in life, you remember that God is always there with you and loves you.

We give thanks to God through our prayers: the prayers we pray together in worship and the prayers we pray silently in our hearts, knowing and trusting that God hears us. As you gather around the dinner table with loved ones, here is a prayer you may wish to use:

Gracious God, we give thanks for gathering us here together. We give thanks for this food, prepared by loving hands. We pray for those who go without food, family, or friendship this day. We give thanks for life, our freedom to enjoy it, and for all the other blessings we have received. Nourish our bodies with this food; give us good health and strength to love, live, and serve as you would have us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.



We all have so much to be thankful for. I pray that you take a moment this month to pause, reflect, and recognize the many blessings God has bestowed upon you. As you and I recognize these blessings, may we joyfully give thanks to God.

"*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1)*

God's blessings,

Pastor Jennifer Soltis

NOVEMBER

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Gianna Sander	1
Quentin Romero Lauro	4
Ruth Kiefer	6
Jane Dollhopf	7
Douglas Messner	7
Joe Coon	17

Anniversaries

John & Diana Mitchell	13
Ed & Carol Banks	23

DON'T LET IT GET UNDER YOUR SKIN

Holidays are meant to bring joy, yet they can easily become stressful. A careless comment, an unmet expectation or a simple misunderstanding may lead to hurt feelings and family tension. Before long, a small disagreement can grow into an argument that overshadows the celebration.

In moments like these, remember the wise teacher who chose to let slights and insults pass. He explained, "I have only one skin, and it covers me very well. I don't let anyone else get under it."

This holiday season, choose patience, extend grace and protect the peace around your table.

NOVEMBER

Baptisms

Jonathan Chantz
Rachel Schmitz
Ruth Kiefer
Kai Edmonds

ATTENDANCE

October Worship (Average)

In-person	YouTube
33	34

Serving This Month

Offering Counters
Diana Mitchell
Lori Coon

Altar Guild
Kim Brandt

Coffee Hour
Volunteer Needed

NHCO Deliveries
Ruth Kiefer

Each week we need Lectors, Ushers, Greeters, Videographers and Offering Counters.

Please consider helping by signing up either on-line or in person on the paper signup across from the kitchen

Church FAMILY PRAYER LIST

Almighty and merciful God,
you are the source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to our siblings, an awareness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In their pain, weariness, and anxiety, surround them with your care, protect them by your loving might, and grant to them once again the gifts of health and strength and peace;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Members, Family & Friends in need of on-going prayers

- Barbaro Kelley *(Member)*
- Adam Brandt *(Charlie Brandt's nephew)*
- Andy & Katy Greer *(Friends of the Heyne's)*
- Pr. Tony Schneck *(SWPA pastor)*
- Pr. John Cawkins *(SWPA pastor)*
- Andy & Linda Halcoussis *(Members)*
- Janet Liotta *(Nicole Kirkland's Aunt)*
- Terri Brandt *(Charlie Brandt's Sister)*
- Dave Miller *(Lori Coon's Father)*
- Matt Fickes *(Friend of the Coon's)*
- Keith Huffman *(Carol Huffman's son)*
- Sandy Hutchins *(Friend of Ruth Kiefer)*

Service Personnel:

- Sarah Foster *(Traci Saunder's daughter)*
- Allison Stover *(Cheryl Kilbert's granddaughter)*
- Noah Hardesty *(Cheryl Kilbert's grandson-in-law)*

Need To Submit a Prayer Request?

Call the Church
(412) 346.4971

Email the Church
NativityLC@verizon.net

submit one through our website's **on-line form**

Women of the ELCA

All women of Nativity and their friends are welcome to join our weekly meetings and activities which are held on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Our schedule for November is as follows:

Nov 3 - Project Day – Quilting
Nov 10 - Business Meeting
Nov 17 - Bible Study: *"Bold Faith on an Unexpected Journey"*
Session 3 : *"Proclaiming Resurrection in Hope"*
Nov 24 - Book Review: Murder by Cheesecake by Rachel Ekstrom Courage

QUILTED IN LOVE





In October, we blessed and sent out these quilts, lovingly made by some members of our WELCA group, to be sent out along with many other quilts from throughout our synod, to Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service.

Safety Fair Recap

Thank you to Pastor Jen, Ed & Carol Banks, Merlinda Bisese & Charlie Brandt or being on the ad hoc Church Safety Committee. I received a lot of positive comments from all who attended the Safety Fair on September 13! Hopefully we will never need to use the information we learned, but if we do, we are now prepared!

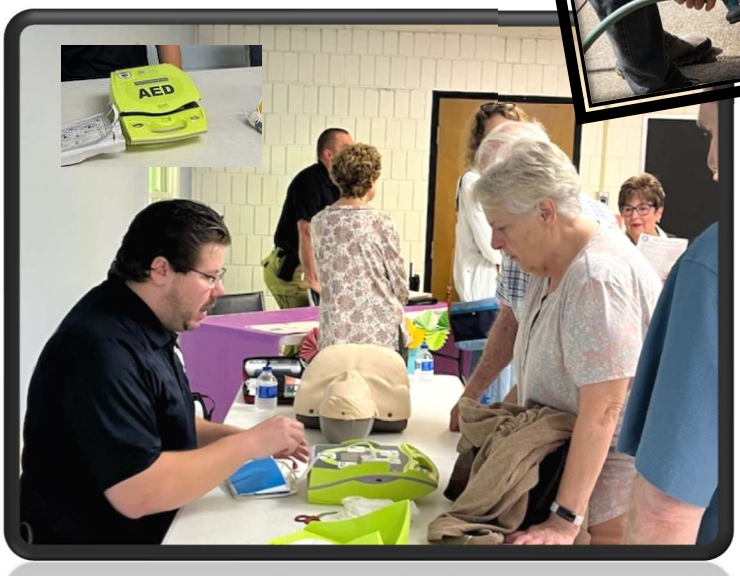
-Jean Chantz













GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.









Thank you Nativity Lutheran Church!

God's blessings are shared through the gifts He gives us. In September, the Stewardship Committee asked for Nativity's support for a Birthday Cake Kit Project for North Hills Community Outreach. As a member of Nativity, you shared His blessings with your incredible kindness and support.

The Birthday Cake Kits only needed a few staple items to make a complete kit but Nativity added some extra touches such as hand drawn birthday cards, party plates, napkins, birthday candles, banners and other party decorations.

This was the fun part! With lots of Nativity helping hands an assembly line was set up in the Fellowship Hall where 9 x 13 disposable pans were filled, topped with plastic lids, and tied with curling ribbons.

Your generosity in time, resources, and love truly made a difference in our community, and on October 18, 2026, together, we were able to assemble 30 Birthday Cake Kits which were delivered to NHCO. Thank you for the time and dedication you contributed to make it possible.

A birthday cake might seem like a small thing, but for a family struggling to make ends meet, it can mean so much.

It is a blessing to be part of such a compassionate and generous community. Your actions embody the spirit of love and fellowship that our church stands for. Thank you once again for your unwavering support.

Stewardship,
Nan Shuey, Pastor Jennifer, Ruth Kiefer, and Bonnie Varley

M·H·Y
FAMILY SERVICES

Again, this year, we are collecting Christmas gifts for MHY Family Services. MHY (Mars Home for Youth) Family Services is a non-profit organization serving youth with intensive behavioral needs and social challenges, providing them a safe environment on their journey to wellness.

Each year, MHY supports hundreds of boys, girls and families in our community through specialized trauma-based treatment and private academic school. This year, more than ever, we know that kids are struggling and facing challenges far beyond their years.

You can support them through the opportunities they've shared on the attached flier "2026 Christmas Wish List" and bring them some Holiday cheer. Your generosity will bring a smile to a child's face!

Please bring in your unwrapped gifts to church by Sunday, November 29. Gifts can be placed in the bins under the coat rack and will be kept in Pastor's office until the delivery date. Please include your name and address with each gift so every donation is tracked and thanked properly. See attached Flyer for specific donation items. Copies are also available at church.

Support a Student

Nativity has 3 college students that Christian Outreach will be sending a care package before mid-term exams. We are also looking for members to continue to support them through the school year. Some ideas to keep in touch are: e-mails, special occasion cards, a small goody box or gift cards. We only need one person per student through May. Please see Carol Huffman if interested or with any questions.



TURKEY ON EVERY TABLE

NHCO's Turkey on Every Table will run through November 15th. This project gathers groceries for a Thanksgiving dinner. Donations of specific Thanksgiving grocery Items, cash for grocery gift cards are the most requested. Shopping lists are available on our website and in the Narthex.

NHCO Food Pantry / Sharing Project Volunteers

Social Ministry is looking for volunteers for 2027 deliveries of the food pantry and sharing project collections. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board or sign-up genius.

Volunteering

Have you ever wondered how you could be more involved in volunteering with our local partners in ministry in the area?

There are so many wonderful organizations that do wonderful ministry that depend on volunteers to serve the needs of the community. Here are links to three organizations webpages where you can find out ways you can volunteer.

The Blessing Board - Volunteer – The Blessing Board
Hearth - Volunteer - HEARTH
NHCO - Volunteer - NHCO


NATIVITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL
Friendsgiving
DINNER
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14
5 PM
RSVP
online or across
from the kitchen

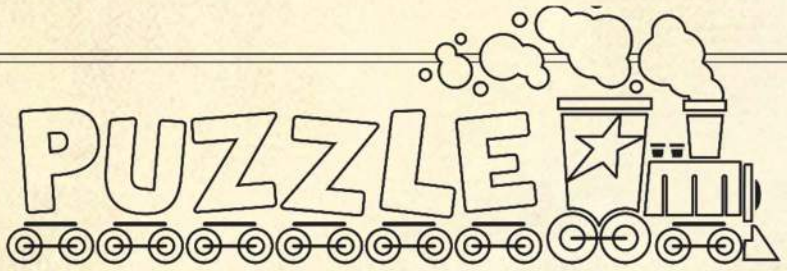
CHRISTIAN SYMBOL

DOOR — A door symbolizes our invitation to engage in prayer and a personal relationship with Jesus: "Knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7, NIV). A door can also represent Jesus' loving invitation to open our hearts to him: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20, NIV). When we welcome him in, we receive the joy of fellowship and life with Christ.



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Due to low participation, we are taking a break from offering Adult Sunday school. In place of meeting Sunday mornings, Bible study will be offered on a weekday evening over zoom. Please let Pastor Jen know if you are interested in participating and what day of the week works best for you. Classes to begin later this month.



Counting Our Blessings

Thanksgiving is a great opportunity to "count our blessings." God blesses each of us daily in so many ways. Solve the following math problems. Then write the words on the numbered lines below to complete Ephesians 1:3, NIV.

14 - 7 = ____ Father
10 + 9 = ____ heavenly
10 + 5 = ____ blessed
2 - 1 = ____ Praise
7 + 7 = ____ has
11 + 11 = ____ every
12 + 12 = ____ blessing
10 + 10 = ____ realms
13 + 13 = ____ Christ
8 + 8 = ____ us
8 + 9 = ____ in
5 + 5 = ____ Lord
10 + 11 = ____ with
10 + 15 = ____ in
6 - 3 = ____ to
12 - 6 = ____ and
6 + 6 = ____ Christ
18 - 9 = ____ our
22 - 11 = ____ Jesus
1 + 1 = ____ be
7 + 6 = ____ who
2 + 2 = ____ the
10 - 5 = ____ God
4 + 4 = ____ of
9 + 9 = ____ the
10 + 13 = ____ spiritual

"____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
1 2 3 4 5 6
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
7 8 9 10 11 12
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
13 14 15 16 17 18
____ ____ ____ ____
19 20 21 22
____ ____ ____ ____."
23 24 25 26

Ephesians 1:3, NIV

Answer: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Adult Faith Formation

We will gather for our Adult Faith Formation Gathering on **Sunday, November 15** after worship at Adrian's Pizza in Gibsonia. Let Pr. Jen know if you plan on attending.



Faithful Witness



Many churches observe All Saints' Day on November 1, a time to remember believers who have died in the faith and give thanks for their faithful witness.

The story of Christianity is filled with ordinary people who held fast to Christ in both joyful and difficult seasons. Across the centuries, countless believers have followed Jesus with courage, and many have even given their lives while bearing witness to God's love and the saving grace of Christ. Even today, Christians in some parts of the world continue to face persecution for their faith.

On this day, take time to remember our Christian heritage with gratitude. Give thanks for those who remained faithful before us, and ask God to help us follow Christ with the same courage, hope and steadfast faith.

The Journey of the Church Year

Advent begins on Sunday, November 29, in 2026. In many Christian traditions, Advent also marks the beginning of the church year. Rather than starting with a new calendar, the church begins by preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.



Advent leads to Christmas, followed by Epiphany, traditionally observed on January 6, 2027, to remember the revelation of Christ to the nations and the visit of the wise men. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10, and guides believers toward Holy Week and Easter Sunday, March 28.

Forty days after Easter, Christians observe Ascension Day on May 6, remembering how Jesus "was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9, ESV). Pentecost follows on May 16, 50 days after Easter. On that day, the Holy Spirit empowered Christ's followers and united them for the church's mission.

The season after Pentecost continues until Advent arrives once more, inviting the church to begin the sacred journey again.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NOVEMBER

November 1

- Revelation 7:9-17

The multitudes of heaven worship the Lamb

- Psalm 34:1-10, 22

Fear the Lord, you saints of the Lord; for those who fear the Lord lack nothing. (Ps. 34:9)

- 1 John 3:1-3

We are God's children

- Matthew 5:1-12

Blessed are the poor in spirit

November 8

- Amos 5:18-24

Let justice roll down like waters

- Psalm 70

You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry. (Ps. 70:5)

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The promise of the resurrection

- Matthew 25:1-13

The story of the wise and foolish bridesmaids

November 15

- Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

The day of the Lord

- Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. (Ps. 90:12)

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Be alert for the day of the Lord

- Matthew 25:14-30

The story of the slaves entrusted with talents

November 22

- Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

God will shepherd Israel

- Psalm 95:1-7a

We are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand. (Ps. 95:7)

- Ephesians 1:15-23

The reign of Christ

- Matthew 25:31-46

The coming of the Son of Man; the separation of sheep and goats

November 29

- Isaiah 64:1-9

Prayer that God would come with power and compassion

- Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

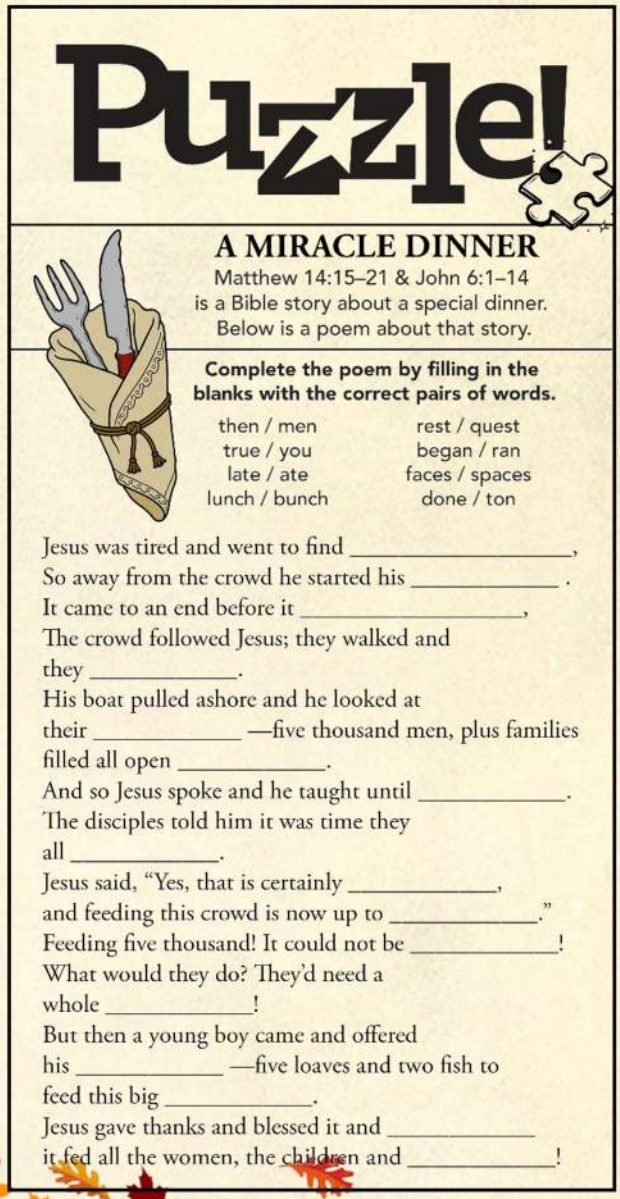
Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end

- Mark 13:24-37

The sudden coming of the Son of Man



Puzzle!

A MIRACLE DINNER

Matthew 14:15–21 & John 6:1–14 is a Bible story about a special dinner. Below is a poem about that story.

Complete the poem by filling in the blanks with the correct pairs of words.

then / men	rest / quest
true / you	began / ran
late / ate	faces / spaces
lunch / bunch	done / ton

Jesus was tired and went to find _____,
So away from the crowd he started his _____ .
It came to an end before it _____,
The crowd followed Jesus; they walked and
they _____.
His boat pulled ashore and he looked at
their _____ —five thousand men, plus families
filled all open _____.
And so Jesus spoke and he taught until _____.
The disciples told him it was time they
all _____.
Jesus said, "Yes, that is certainly _____,
and feeding this crowd is now up to _____."
Feeding five thousand! It could not be _____!
What would they do? They'd need a
whole _____!
But then a young boy came and offered
his _____ —five loaves and two fish to
feed this big _____.
Jesus gave thanks and blessed it and _____
it fed all the women, the children and _____!

Answers: rest, quest, began/ran, faces, spaces/late, ate, true/you, done, ton, lunch, bunch, then, men

Christmas 2026 WISHLIST

Please ensure that all donations are received by Friday, December 4th

Most of the children we serve are pre-teens and teens (ages 11–18).
We especially welcome gifts that reflect the interests and needs of this age group.

PLEASE include your name and address with each gift/Amazon order so every donation is tracked and thanked properly.

Scan to shop

Toys & Play

- LEGO and building sets
- Dolls and doll accessories
- Action figures
- Toy cars and trucks
- Play-Doh and craft kits
- Science and STEM kits
- Puzzles
- Board games and card games - UNO, Connect 4, Jenga, Trouble
- Sports balls and equipment
- Remote-control toys
- Stuffed animals/weighted stuffed animals
- Fidget toys and sensory items

Arts, Music & Creativity

- Art sets/craft sets
- Sketchbooks
- Colored pencils and marker
- Canvases
- Paint sets/Paint by numbers
- Jewelry-making kits
- Journals
- Musical instruments for beginners
- Karaoke microphones
- Noise cancelling headphones

Popular Gifts for Tweens & Teens

- Bluetooth speakers
- Wireless earbuds
- Portable chargers
- Phone accessories
- LED room lights
- Water bottles and tumblers
- Crossbody bags
- Wallets
- Sports team merchandise
- Hoodies and sweatshirts
- Pajama sets
- Slippers
- Journals and planners
- Batteries (AA & AAA)
- Sensory lights
- Noise reducing headphones
- Putty
- Kinetic sand
- Adult coloring books
- Model kits
- Diamond art kits

Books & Learning

- Children's books
- Young adult books
- Graphic novels
- Coloring and activity books
- Educational games
- Flash cards
- Workbooks
- School supplies
- Calculators
- Notebooks and journal sets
- Cooking kits
- Measuring spoons
- Easy recipe books

Clothing & Winter Essentials (variety of sizes for children, teens, and adults)

- Winter coats
- Hoodies and sweatshirts
- Sweatpants
- Pajamas
- Socks
- Hats
- Gloves and mittens
- Scarves
- Boots
- Sneakers
- Slippers

Self-Care & Personal Care

- Body wash
- Lotion
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Hair-care products for diverse hair types
- Hairbrushes, combs, and accessories
- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Lip balm
- Body sprays
- Bath and body gift sets
- Nail-care kits
- Makeup for teens
- Shaving supplies
- Feminine hygiene products
- Self-care kits
- Weighted lap pads
- Body socks
- Chew safe sensory items
- Grooming supplies
- Exercise balls
- Reusable shopping bags

Gifts & Essentials for Families

- Pillows
- Bath towels
- Kitchen towels
- Pots and pans
- Cookware
- Food-storage containers
- Dishes and glassware
- Small kitchen appliances
- Laundry baskets
- Laundry detergent
- Household cleaning supplies
- Paper products
- Toiletries
- Family board games
- Family movie night baskets

Holiday & Family Experience Gifts

- Holiday baking kits
- Cookie decorating kits
- Gingerbread house kits
- Hot cocoa baskets
- Family game-night baskets
- Family movie night baskets
- Arts and crafts baskets
- Winter fun baskets

Gift Cards

- Target
- Walmart
- Amazon
- Visa or Mastercard
- Aldi, Giant Eagle, Shop 'n Save, Trader Joe's, Kuhn's, and other grocery stores
- Clothing stores
- Shoe stores
- Restaurants and fast-food locations
- Gas stations
- Activity gift cards (Kamin Science Center, Sky Zone, bowling)

Donations accepted weekdays from 8:30am - 4:30pm at the administrative office building.

521 Route 228,
Mars, PA 16046

M·H·Y FAMILY SERVICES

Questions - Contact Lisa Perry, Chief Advancement Officer
724-625-3141, ext. 283
LPerry@mhyfamilyservices.org

Thank You
for wrapping our children in kindness and making them feel truly special this holiday season!

November 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 All Saints Sunday	2 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	3 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	4	5	6	7
8 *Christian Ed Mtg*	9 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	10 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p W&M - 7p	11	12 Council Mtg - 7p	13	14 Friendsgiving
15 Faith Formation Luncheon	16 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	17 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	18	19	20	21
22 Christ the King Greening of the Church	23 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	24 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	25	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29 Advent I	30 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	1 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	2	3	4	5 Erect outdoor Nativity
6 Advent 2	7 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	Notes We worship every Sunday at 10:15 am **Children's Sunday School** meets the 1st & 3rd Sundays at 9:15 am				