

SHELLS MESSENGER

Shells Evangelical Lutheran Church

December 2025

Vibrant Worship + Active Service
 Accessible Education + Enriching Fellowship
 287 Shells Church Road, Grantville, PA 17028
 717-469-2586
www.shellschurch.org

We are a community of the Triune God, nourished by Word and Sacrament, sent forth by the Holy Spirit into the Grantville community and beyond to share the life-changing news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

SAVE THE DATES:

December 3 @ 7pm – Advent Vespers at Shells

December 6 – St. John Hoernerstown Christmas Marketplace

December 7 @ 9am – The Second Sunday of Advent with the Welcome of Catechumens

December 7 after worship – Annual Congregation Meeting and Advent Family Event

December 7 @ 5pm – Parish Cookie Bake

December 12 @ 7pm – Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

(Deacon Kristen's Five Year Ordination Anniversary)

December 14 @ 3pm – Christmas Caroling

December 17 @ 7pm - Advent Vespers at St. John Hoernerstown

December 24 @ 4pm – The Nativity of the Lord at St. John Hoernerstown

December 24 @ 7pm – The Nativity of the Lord (Family Liturgy)

December 24 @ 10pm – The Nativity of the Lord (Traditional Liturgy)

December 25 @ 10am – The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)

January 6 @ 7pm – The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

January 23, 2026 - Family Game Night at Shells

February 20, 2026 – Hershey Bears Hockey Game

March 22, 2026 - Concert at St. Patrick Cathedral Harrisburg

April 18, 2026 - Walk at East Hanover Township Park

May 17, 2026 - Mini Golf

June 20, 2026 - Knoebels

The racetrack project will be collecting items each month this year Items still needed include bath towels, chap stick / lip balm, shampoo, shave cream, deodorant, cube shape tissue boxes. This year we will be providing 100 toiletry bags for the Race Track. 60 Men and 40 Women and we will be assembling them on December 14th. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated. Thank You!

Our Annual Congregation Meeting, Advent Family Event, and Potluck will be held on December 7. A sign-up for the meal is in the Narthex.

The 2026 Altar Flower chart is in the Narthex.

Thank you very much for your generous donations to Susquehanna Service Dogs!! We collected over 51 rolls of paper towels, \$75 in gift cards, 2 packages of mailing address labels, and numerous packages of dog treats! It never ceases to amaze me how generous our congregation is! Thanks again! Kathy Espenshade



Advent Vespers and Cookie Social

Wednesday, December 3 at 7pm
Wednesday, December 17 at 7pm at
St. John Lutheran Church, Hoernerstown

Advent Family Event

Sunday, December 7 after 9am Liturgy



Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24
Family Liturgy at 7pm
Traditional Liturgy at 10pm

Christmas Day

Thursday, December 25 at 10am
Brunch at 11:15am

Epiphany of the Lord

Tuesday, January 6 at 7pm

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 18 at Noon at
St. John Lutheran Church, Hoernerstown
Wednesday, February 18 at 7pm at Shells

As always, the generosity of our members is heartwarming. We were able to provide 404.4 pounds of food to the Grantville Food Pantry. Also, the Noisy Offering collected \$446.81. Many of our neighbors will benefit from your generosity. Thank you very much for your continued support.

If you are willing to light the Advent Wreath for one of the Sundays of Advent, please email the Church Office or sign up in the Narthex. We welcome singles, couples, families, and youth to read the responsive readings and light the Advent wreath during Sunday Worship.

This month's special offering will go to benefit ELCA Good Gifts. Please pick up a piggy bank in the Narthex.

Holiday Marketplace: December 6 from 9am -1pm at St. John Lutheran Church Hoernerstown. Cookies by the pound! Local vendors with homemade foods and crafts. Come shopping for your last-minute Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers.

We would like to thank everyone for their prayers, food, and donations during the time of Joe's illness and death. Your love and support during this difficult time was a huge blessing and greatly appreciated.

Diana & Jessie Budd

Dear Shells Church family,

We thank you for the opportunity we had to attend the Women's Retreat with Christ Lutheran Church from Elizabethtown. We were able to examine our individual God-given talents and explored ways to use them. We worshipped together and got to know some amazing women. We came home rejuvenated, ready to take on our spiritual and personal lives. It was truly an enlightening weekend and we encourage others to attend next year.

*In His Service,
Connie and Sheryl*

Financial Q&A from the Finance Committee

I am withdrawing funds from my IRA and would like to direct some to Shells Lutheran Church. How can I do it?

If you are 70 ½ and are withdrawing funds from your Traditional IRA to satisfy your required minimum distribution, you may want to consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution (“QCD”).

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. QCD’s can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distribution (“RMD”) for the year as long as certain rules are met.

In addition to the benefits of giving to charity, a QCD excludes the amount donated from your taxable income, which is unlike regular withdrawals from a Traditional IRA. Keeping your taxable income lower may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions including Social Security and Medicare.

Here are the requirements:

- You must be 70 ½ or older to be eligible to make a QCD
- QCD’s are limited to the amount that would otherwise be taxed as ordinary income.
- For a QCD to count towards your current year’s required minimum distribution, the funds must come out of your IRA by your RMD deadline, generally December 31.

The key rule to remember is that the distribution must be made directly to the charity and not the owner or beneficiary. Distribution checks need to be made payable to the charity or else it will be counted as a taxable distribution. The owner or beneficiary can receive this check and deliver it to the charity but he or she cannot deposit the check and then make out another one to the charity.

You should always consult your financial advisor if you are thinking about a QCD.

If you would like further information about contributing a QCD to Shells Lutheran Church, contact Charles Schreiber at 717-361-3823.

STEWARDSHIP/GIVING (October 31, 2025)

2025 Approved Budget \$295,815

General Fund Income: \$218,318.61

General Fund Expenses: \$248,482.52

Special Funds YTD Contributions

Grantville Food Pantry: \$5,753.74

Capital Improvement Fund: \$41,775

Adult Forum: \$754

ELCA World Hunger: \$2,555

Lutheran Campus Ministry: \$1,445

Lutheran Disaster Response \$2,870

Central PA Food Bank \$1,000

Kid to Kid (VBS): \$600

Love of Family \$5,968

Abiding Memorial Fund: \$52,375

Gotshall Music Memorial \$6,437.25

BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES – DECEMBER

Kevin O’Brien, Bethany Espenshade, Ellie Frye, Megan Frye, Bobbie Boyer, Dan Boyer, Isaac Mende, Julia O’Brien, Lauren O’Brien, Colton Tolland, Alfred Howard, Brandon Suhr, David Roush, Chris Leppo, Olivia Jurell

God will never forget that you are his child.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

12/3	Dick Wenner	12/18	Jordan Frye
12/5	Rick Blair	12/19	Terry Kamerzel
12/6	Erica Strang	12/24	Ruth Espenshade
12/12	Bert Gussler	12/26	Benjamin Long
	Brenda Frye	12/27	Mildred Bower
	Cecilia Stremmel	12/29	Elizabeth Leppo
12/14	Abigail Blair	12/30	Betty Lou Cain

SHELLS MUSIC MINISTRY

*"Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
 Let earth receive her king;
 Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
 And heav'n and nature sing,
 And heav'n and nature sing,
 And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing."*

The **Senior Choir** is working on choral selections for Advent and preparing special music for the Christmas season. Senior choir rehearses weekly on **Thursday** evenings from **7:00 – 8:15pm**. Please join us for this special season!

Choir Schedule:

Dec. 7 – Children in Worship – Shells Bells – “Gloria”
 Dec. 14 – “Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”– Senior Choir
 Dec. 21 – ““Mary, Mary” - Senior Choir
 Dec. 24 – 7pm Christmas Eve Family Service
 10pm Christmas Eve Traditional Candlelight Service
 Dec 28 – 1st Sunday of Christmas

Our **Children In Worship** Sunday School music program continues for our preschool through sixth grade children. Please see our December schedule below:

Dec. 7 – Children in Worship - Hand Chime rehearsal at 10:30am during congregational meeting.

Dec. 24 – 7pm Christmas Eve Family Candlelight Service – The Sunday school children will present a nativity tableau, in costume, at our 7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight service. **Rehearsals** will be held **Dec. 14th** and **21st** at 10:30am, to assign tableau parts, size costumes, and practice the gospel presentation. Please meet in the choir room following worship. I hope your child/children will join us for these special services!

The **Christmas Band Ensemble** will be playing at our Christmas Eve services. **Rehearsals** will be **Thursdays** from **6:30 – 7pm**, Dec. 4, 11 and 18th, and **Sunday 12/14, 6pm**. Please let me know if you play an instrument and are interested in joining this ensemble.

Our **Children & Youth Handchime Choir** for grades 2nd through senior high youth continues with rehearsals the **first and third Sunday** of each month from **10:30 to 11:00 am**. The Handchime Choir is working on music for Advent and our 7pm Christmas Eve service. Please join us to discover Handchimes!

Please contact me if you are interested in sharing in our music program with special music and/or instrumental music during the Christmas season. I can be reached by cell/text 717-991-8862, or email [sdbjd@aol.com](mailto:sbdbjd@aol.com). I hope you will join us for this special time of year!

With joyful song and praise,
 Barbara Dupler
 Director of Music

PRAYER LIST

Prayers for healing of body, mind, or spirit: Diana Budd, Sam Dupler, Betty Espensshade, Crist Espensshade, Cristin Espensshade, Nadine Espensshade, Ed Fake, Mim Fake, Herb Fisher, Diane Gotshall, The Rev. Peter Helmers, Shirley Huber, Nancy Iachini, Keira K, Blane Moreland, Iva Rodemaker, Rena Sattazahn, Amber Sherman, Lucas Smith, Larry Suhr, Bev Ulsh and Jack Ulsh, Don Whitehaus, our homebound members, our Law Enforcement Officers and Service Women & Men, especially Matt Gordon, Nikolas Jaggan, Domonic DeFrank, Keegan Wenner, Stephen Lugovich, Blake O'Brien, Michael Knaub, John Thomas and Chris O'Brien.

Those who have died:

Those preparing for Holy Matrimony: Amber Sherman and Ryan Jaggan.

Those in the Shells Church Catechumenate Process (those preparing for full Confirmed/Voting membership in this congregation): Lexi Frye, Emma Jurell, Evelyn Mende, Julia O'Brien, Nora Holler, Douglass Howard, Anna Iachini, Lauren O'Brien and Lucas Terry.

With thanksgiving, we remember the lives of those who have gone before us in the faith. This month we remember *Ralph Gussler, Sara Plouse, Paul Shelahamer, Adela Wagner, Franklin Wagner.*

Family & Friends: Saadia Baker, Bill Birtle, Tom Boblitz, Dawn Brink, Owen Burns, David Cavanaugh, Kathie Cavanaugh, Cory Cerperich, Dianne Czupil, Karen Domenico, Verna Ebersole, Joan Espensshade, Lori Farro, Erma Fiedler, Bob Gagliardi, Eileen Gagliardi, Christie Gamber, Nancy Gamber, Michael Gelehorte, Adam Gold, Ryann Gold, Anne Gordon, Marian Gudelski, Tom Gussler, Emily Hand, Jason Hash, Rob Herman, Michael Hudak, Ben Isett, Elaine Julian, Kerm Katzaman, Joyce King, Lydia Joy Konisiewicz, Joanne Lauver, Lee Lippi, Eileen Longreen, Paul Longreen, Chris Kelly, Pokhim Ker, Linda Kissinger, Barb Morrow, Nancy Osokie, Amanda Peck, Maisie Peeler, Lisa Pesta, Tony Prisco, Michael Riley, Laura Lou Rinker, Molly Reinhart, June Rohrbach, Marc Rozman, Natalie Rozman, Sandi Rozman, Ryan, Suzanne Shaeffer, Janet Shultz, Kathy Spangler, Jay Stahl, Arlene Terry, Stephanie Wagner, Dale Walmer, Aria Wenner, Kyle Wentz, Carol Wilson, Jennie Womack and Linda Yarnell.

Anyone wishing to place someone on the prayer list may call Theresa at the Shells Office, at 717-469-2586 or email at shellsadmin@shellschurch.org. Also, please remember to remove the names when it is appropriate.

Worship Assistants Schedule: December/ January

	Assistant	Lector	Acolyte	Communion Assistant	Greeter /Usher	Altar Care
December 7 Second Sunday of Advent	Karen Gussler	Lauren O'Brien	(+) Julia O'Brien, Douglass Howard, & Lucas Terry	Louise Murphy	Diana Budd & Audrey Neiswender	Louise Murphy, Karen Gussler & Bobbie Boyer
December 14 Third Sunday of Advent	Sherry Ulsh	Olga Miller	Abigail Blair	Don Whitehaus	Bert & Karen Gussler	Diane Suhr & Terry Kamerzel
December 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe @ 7pm	David Wall		Mary Shellenberger (+), Douglass Howard, & Emma Jurell			

December 21 Fourth Sunday of Advent	Karlene Jaggan	Lisa Lugovich	Nora Holler	Don Whitehaus	Rick & Linda Blair	Steve, Kathy & Bethany Espenshade
December 24 Christmas Eve @ 7pm	Karen Gussler	Julia O'Brien	Anna Iachini (+), Abigail Blair, & Lucas Terry	Carol Gordon	Tom & Sandy Mader	
December 24 Christmas Eve @ 10pm	Karlene Jaggan	Steve Espenshade	Mary Shellenberger (+), Jacob Mende, & Emma Jurell	Louise Murphy	Diana Budd & Audrey Neiswender	
December 25 Christmas Day @ 10am	Karlene Jaggan		Douglass Howard			
December 28 Holy Family	Karen Gussler	Karen Gussler	Evelyn Mende	Louise Murphy	Tom & Sandy Mader	Sandy Mader & Katie Shellenberger
January 4 Second Sunday of Christmas	Raelene Smith	Douglass Howard	Lily Iachini	Audrey Neiswender	Diana Budd & Audrey Neiswender	Diana Budd & Carol Gordon
January 6 Epiphany @ 7pm	Karlene Jaggan	Raelene Smith	Mary Shellenberger (+), Douglass Howard, Lucas Terry, and Abigail Blair	Louise Murphy	Tom & Sandy Mader	
January 11 Baptism of the Lord	Karlene Jaggan	Nadine Espenshade	(+) Julia O'Brien, Lexi Frye, & Lucas Terry	Louise Murphy	Rich & Nadine Espenshade	Raelene Smith & Janet Klos
January 18 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	Sherry Ulsh	Brenda Frye	Ellie Frye	Audrey Neiswender	Amber Sherman & Family	Louise Murphy, Karen Gussler & Bobbie Boyer
January 25 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	Gen Whitehaus	Steve Espenshade	Nora Holler	Don Whitehaus	Bert & Karen Gussler	Diane Suhr & Terry Kamerzel

If you are unable to serve on your scheduled date please find a replacement and notify the Church Office by Wednesday of each week. On Sundays that have more than one acolyte scheduled, the name with the (+) denotes serving as the main acolyte (carries the cross, holds the missal book, etc).

DECEMBER 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30pm Bible Study @ Shells	2	3 2pm Grief Support 7pm Vespers & Cookie Social @ Shells	4 7pm Choir	5	6 Holiday Market at St. John
7 Advent 2 <i>Children in Wor- ship</i> ~Annual Congregation Meeting ~Advent Family Event & Potluck ~ Hand Chime Choir ~ 5pm Christmas Cookie Bake ~6pm Scouts	8 6:30pm Bible Study @ St. John	9 6:30pm Parish Council	10 2pm Grief Support	11 7pm Choir	12 7pm Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe <i>Deacon Kristen's 5th Anniversary of Ordination</i>	13
14 Advent 3 ~Children/Youth/ Sunday School & Confirmation ~ Assemble Race Track Bags ~ 3pm Christmas Caroling ~ 6pm Scouts	15 Race Track Meal 6:30pm Bible Study @ Shells	16	17 2pm Grief Support 7pm Vespers & Cookie Social @ St. John Food Pantry	18 7pm Choir Food Pantry	19 Food Pantry	20
21 Advent 4 ~ Children/Youth/ Sunday School & Confirmation ~ Tree Decorating ~ 6pm Scouts	22 6:30pm Bible Study @ St. John	23	24 Christmas Eve 4pm @ St. John 7pm Family Liturgy 10pm Traditional Liturgy	25 10am Christmas Day with Brunch	26	27
28 Holy Family	29	30	31			

**SHELLS EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Grantville, PA 17028

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Council Members:

C. Blair, S. Espenshade, B. Frye (VP), C. Frye (S), S. Mader (P), M. Stremmel, T. Terry, S. Ulsh (T)