



Church's Office Phone (717)933-4723 Church's Office Fax (717) 933-9223 www.LittleSwatara.org

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"Life Abounds"

April is a month that reminds us that God is in the business of bringing life out of what once seemed dead. All around us the signs of spring begin to appear. The ground that looked cold and lifeless through the winter slowly begins to give way to green shoots, budding trees, and the return of birdsong. Creation itself preaches a quiet sermon: life follows death.

That message lies at the very heart of our faith.

As we move toward Easter, we remember that the story of Jesus passed through the darkness of the cross before arriving at the glory of the empty tomb. To the disciples on Good Friday, everything seemed lost. Their hopes appeared buried along with their Lord. But on the third day God did what only He can do—He brought life out of death.

The resurrection reminds us that God's power is not limited by our circumstances. What seems finished to us is not finished to Him. Whether we face personal struggles, uncertainty about the future, or seasons when faith feels weary, the empty tomb declares that hope is never wasted in God's hands.

In rural communities like ours, we understand seasons well. Farmers plant seeds in faith long before they see the harvest. In the same way, God often works quietly beneath the surface of our lives. What we cannot yet see, He is already preparing.

As we celebrate Easter this month, may we remember that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is still at work today—bringing renewal to hearts, restoring hope, and calling people to new life in Him.

My prayer is that this Easter season will fill your home with the joy and peace that come from the risen Christ.

"He is not here; He has risen!" (Luke 24:6)

Grace and peace,
Pastor Matt



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Richard Yenser	1	Gerald Bowman	5	Shirley Groff	19
Robin A. Zulick	1	Gary Emerich	7	Jayne E. Diamond	19
Amanda Heckman	2	Sara Haag	8	Ashley J. Dunning	20
Beth Ann Stuck	2	Chris Boehmer	10	Lori Seitzinger	22
Greg Bryant	4	Pauline Seiler	10	Carol Lane	23
Terri Holden	4	Steve R. Bostwick	10	Rebecca Rebman	23
Katie Light	4	Ashley M. Koch	12	Eric Dreibelbis	27
		Eric Stupp	13	Janelle Rebman	27
		Roger L. Himmelberger, Jr	14	Dennis Ulrich	27
		Kara Henning	17	Jean Keeney	28
		Loretta Hollenbach	18	Stephan Bross	30

2026 Organization Officers

Moderator - John Wise
 Asst. Moderator - Todd Rebman
 Church Clerk - Dianne High
 Treasurer - Jamie Wise
 Financial Secretary - Jean Myers

2026 Committee Chairs

Stewardship & Property - Richard Yenser
 Christian Education - Ashley Koch
 Missions & Evangelism - Denise Bohn
 Spiritual Nurture Ministry - Gary Bashore
 Music and Worship - Allen Rebman

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday–Wednesday–Thursday
10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this month's Newsletter. The deadline for the next edition is the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Open to all. Feel free to share Little Swatara Church related events, thoughts, pictures of past events, articles summarizing past and future events, or anything else.

Email: secretary@littleswatara.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 1** 6:00 PM Family Movie Night / FH
- 3** 7:30 PM Good Friday Service
- 5** 10:30 AM Easter Service
(no 8:30 service)
- 7** 7:00 PM Leadership Team meeting
- 9** 6:00 PM 50+ Club meeting / FH
- 12** Food Pantry Collection Sunday
- 14** 11:30 AM Widows Luncheon / Ctry Fare
- 15** Newsletter deadline
- 17** 8:00 AM Feed Them / kitchen
3:00 PM Bethel Food Pantry
- 20** 7:00 PM Music & Worship team mtg
- 21** 8:00 AM Women's Fellowship mtg / FH
- 25** 7:00 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast / café
- 26** Preschool Sunday
- 28** Ministry Team minutes due
- 30** 6:00 PM Preschool Board meeting

Information Updates from Little Swatara



Become Part of Our Church Family

Membership Classes

As spring is soon upon us, perhaps you've thought of being baptized and would have interest in joining our church family as a member. Please see Pastor Matt or relay to anyone in leadership or a deacon of your desires. This can be membership transfer as well as reaffirmation of faith.

Need a boost? If you would like to receive a weekly Bible encouragement text from Pastor Matt. Please text him at 717-675-3946



Mother-Daughter Banquet
May 9th, 2026
6:00 PM



The next Women's Fellowship meeting is **Tuesday, April 21st at 9:00 AM**

The best mathematical equation ever given:
1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given



April 3rd – Good Friday Service 7:30 PM

April 5th– Easter Sunrise Service 7:00 AM at Host Church
Easter Service at LSCOB at 10:30 AM (no 8:30 AM Service)

WIDOWS



LUNCHEON

The next Widows luncheon **Tuesday, April 14th 11:30 A.M.**

The Country Fare Restaurant Myerstown, PA



Family Movie Night
"The Last Supper" 2025
April 1st @ 6:00 PM
Fellowship Hall



We are seeking a dependable **Substitute Church Secretary** to provide temporary office support as needed. Duties include answering phones, basic correspondence, and administrative tasks. Office and computer skills preferred. Please contact Rich Yenser or a member of the Stewardship and Property Committee for more information.

Answer: B (Matthew 27:51; Matthew 28:2)



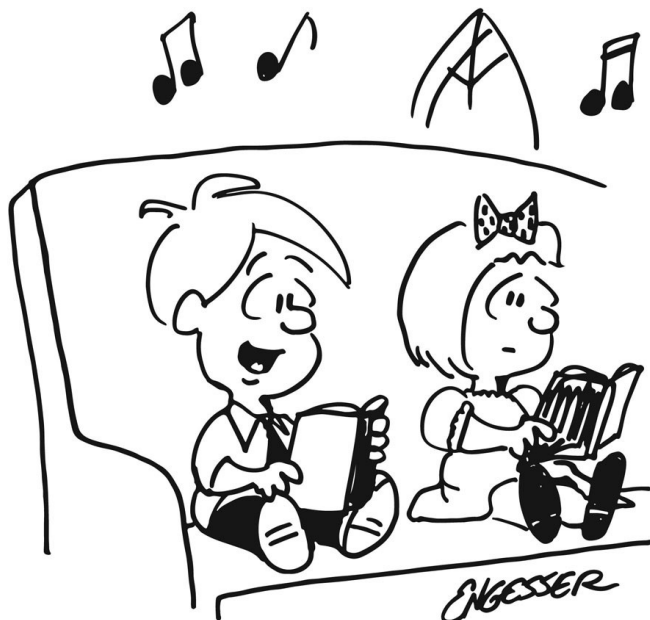
**Annual Tractor, Truck & Car Show
Saturday, June 20th, 2026
8:00 am - 1:00 pm**

Come to see the various vehicles, the parade, the tool sale, the yard sale and to enjoy the food! There will be children’s activities too. Watch for more details closer to the date.

**Bethel-Tulpehocken Public Library
Movie Night**

Tuesday, April 28th at 6:00 pm
“Sponge Bob–Search for Square Pants”
Rated PG

All movies will have free freshly made popcorn and lemonade. Please register by calling or texting 717-933-4060



“Hope the choir does some hip-hop for Easter!”



Cookbooks are a wonderful way to share favorite church recipes remembered from our potluck meals and bake sales. There are 2 editions available for sale. If you are interested, see any member of the Women’s Fellowship. The new version (with the red cover) is \$5.00 and the older version (with the yellow cover) is \$3.00

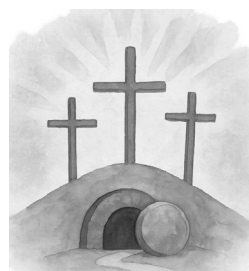
**Annual District-Wide
Older Adult Spring Luncheon**

**Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 12 noon
Yoder’s Restaurant, New Holland, PA**

Join us for a celebration of Fellowship,
Food and Fun!

Cost \$27 Registration Deadline April 26th
Registration at: <https://tinyurl.com/88exesdk>
or call ANE District Office for help
717-367-4730

Bible Quiz



According to Matthew’s account, something remarkable happened to the earth on the day Jesus was crucified and again on the morning when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited the tomb. What occurred on both days?

- A. There was a flood on both days.
- B. There was an earthquake on both days
- C. There was a huge fire on each day.
- D. There was complete darkness on both days

Answer on page 3



Missions
and
Evangelism

April Mission of the Month

April's Mission of the Month is our own Little Swatara Preschool. The Preschool has been a mission of our church for more than 25 years, and has even seen student's return as parents and teachers. The purpose of our schedule is to provide spiritual and academic instruction for children ages 3 through kindergarten, where they can joyfully adjust to being away from home. As our Mission of the Month, you can help reduce tuition expenses for families in our area.



Save the Date Sunday at Camp

This year, we will be having our annual Sunday at Camp Swatara on July 19, 2026.....

Past years have been in June but scheduling conflicts have us picking July instead. We have sites along the tree line across from the Fellowship Hall in the 70's reserved along with 4 cabins. Please call Family Camp and reserve your spot.

On Sunday, July 19th, please worship with us at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall that morning instead of at the church since we will be at camp.

Any questions please reach out to any member of the Leadership Team.



Vacation Bible School July 13 - 17th, 2026

The VBS committee is excited to announce our theme for 2026. We can't wait to take our children on the "Snowball Mountain Challenge".

We are looking for volunteers to help with VBS. If available, please contact Melissa Emerich at 717-269-1669 , the church secretary, or any member of the VBS Committee: Melissa Emerich, Pat Timmins, Deb Wengert, Jenna Baez, Ashley Koch, or Aimee Ruffner.

We are also looking for toilet paper rolls, poly-fill, and white tablecloths (plastic or cloth), &/ or white sheets. Thank you for helping us bring our theme to life.



Little Swatara Preschool is accepting enrollment applications for the 2026-27 school year. If you would like more information, please visit our website at: LittleSwatara.org or contact Sara Bryant, Director at: sara.bryant@littleswatara.org

"We are Easter people living in a Good Friday world."
-Barbara Johnson

Reflections

by Richard E. Frantz

The celebration of Easter in our Church of the Brethren congregation during the decades of the 1940's and 50's would have been out of the normal as compared with today. First of all, we had no piano or organ. All music was vocal. Imagine singing "Christ the Lord is Risen today" a cappella. We did it back then and never thought a second about it. Finding some of our most mature members that always attended the "big church" and have memories of the Easter Sunday worship services, was a challenge. One remembers that one time someone had erected the outside of the grave and the rolled-away stone. A Sunday School class was responsible for chancel flowers every Sunday.

As of 1951 the Little Swatara congregation saved a bulletin every Sunday and had them bound at the end of the year. In preparation for this article, I checked all the years from 1951 through 1960 to see whether we had special programs. In 1951 at the big church, four teenagers had recitations commemorating Easter. Only the bulletin covers had a picture related to Easter. From 1952 through 1955 nothing special was listed. Then in 1956 it listed that the Schubert Children's Department would have an Easter Program instead of the regular lesson period. After that, from 1957 to 1960, there was nothing.

Remember that our congregation was divided into the main church and the Schubert Mission Point. My family attended Schubert Meeting House every Sunday. We had a regular attendance of 30 to 40 people. That included everyone from newborns to the very old. In 1956 in planning for the celebration of Easter, our leaders used just about everyone for a part in the recounting of the resurrection of Christ.

I remember that Easter especially. Ed Houser, Robert's father, was selected to play the role of Barabbas. Ed was normally a quiet, happy man. When Pilot got to the point where he asked the crowd whom they want him to set free, they all shouted "Barabbas". At that point two guards entered that little church, leading Ed. He was wrapped in big heavy chains, shouting and rustling his chains, swinging his arms and stomping his feet. As you can guess, I remember that part of that Easter celebration quite clearly. This is evidence that drama has lasting effects on children.

In those days we had no piano. Later, the Schubert church council accepted a piano from Marlene Blatt and we had accompaniment for all our singing from then on. One former member remembered that the three pianists were Marlene Blatt, Gladys Gibble and Dorothy Frantz. In addition to the Easter memories was the memory that Jane Reber, wife of Jake, brought a handful of flowers nearly every Sunday of the year to place on the pulpit, especially at Easter.

What a change, today! The whole front of the sanctuary is filled with flowers. Marlene Blatt continues to fill the church with thrilling organ music. The children's choir and the adult choir sing. The bell choir enhances the mood of worship with their songs. The praise band leads us in uplifting music.

And now an egg hunt has become a part of our religious experience. It was once part of secular culture, run by service organizations. How did that happen?

Happy Retirement

Our congregation is served by many individuals who work on a voluntary basis or work for pay because of the number of hours and the type of work that they do. Without the dedication of these wonderful people, we would not be able to provide the services, the support, and the blessings that we have come to expect here at Little Swatara. We have three individuals moving on from their respective roles who have provided many years of outstanding, selfless, dedicated service. Please join us in thanking them for their many years of outstanding service!

Dianne Younker---11 years as church treasurer.

We've been blessed for the last 11 years. In an era when churches are struggling to find a reliable treasurer and often hire accounting firms to keep the books, run payroll, and file tax forms, we were blessed to have a competent, hard-working, dedicated individual who knew us and our needs and could navigate the needs of this position. Dianne kept the books, paid the bills, made deposits, ran payroll, and kept us organized. And she did it with a smile. As anyone who has been on the Stewardship and Property team over the last 11 years would tell you, it has been a pleasure working with Dianne. Her dedication, consistency, accuracy, and attention to detail was second to none. She always had the answers we needed, or knew how to find them.

Tracy Bastian--11 years

Tracy came on at the same time that Dianne did. She has been a blessing to this church, the Stewardship and Property Committee, and to Dianne. She fine-tuned QuickBooks, set up subaccounts in QuickBooks, and familiarized Dianne with the church's system of subaccounts. She has filed our taxes and served in an advisory capacity for the last 11 years. She did not hold an official position in our church, but took time out of her busy schedule to make sure we were taken care of. Her expertise and guidance have been a blessing, and she did it all for free.

We appreciate all that Dianne and Tracy did and want to thank them for a job well done. Over the last 11 years, the two of them worked seamlessly to handle all of the unusual things that came up. They have a very high regard for each other. Dianne has often expressed appreciation for Tracy's expertise and availability as a consultant. Tracy also expressed her appreciation for Dianne's excellent work, attentiveness to detail and thorough research before seeking assistance from Tracy.

We would also like to thank Dianne for taking the time to train Jamie Wise as our new treasurer and for being there for her questions.

Continued >>>

Tony Fazio-- 20 years landscaping and groundskeeping
Over the last 20 years, Tony has kept the lawn mowed, the sidewalks cleaned and the exterior of our church looking great. For a number of years he has done the mulching as well. In conversations while he was working, he was always quick to point out that he was doing the Lord's Work. He knew that we needed the work done and he made sure it happened. He was dedicated, hard-working, and reliable. He put in a lot of hours (and we suspect that there were a lot of hours he did not submit for pay). At times it felt like you couldn't visit the grounds on a weeknight and not see Tony working.

These individuals and their service will be missed, but new people are stepping up to complete the tasks that need to be completed.

Thank you for blessing our congregation with your skills, your dedication, and your attention to detail!



We have chow-chow available for purchase. Chow-Chow is an easy gift for any occasion. Quarts & pints are available. See any member of the Women's Fellowship if you are interested.

Quarts \$9.00 Pints \$5.00

Rain: A Gentle Reminder of God's Care

A rainy day can be many things ...
It can be moisture for the farmer's garden,
Or the picnic that has to be postponed;
It can be the replenishing of a stream,
Or the overflow of a flood;
It can be relief from a hot summer day,
Or the chill of an autumn wind.
The rotating cycle of clouds to Earth
Is part of Nature's plan
For stability throughout the Universe,
As old as the hills,
And dependable as the seasons.
Rain and sunshine are equal partners
In the daily expression of God's love.

— Jeanne D. Birrell



Lunch N' Learn @ Londonderry Village

April 16, 2026 / 12:00 pm / Fellowship Hall in the Snell Community Center on the Londonderry Village Campus / Reservations Required

"How Plants Predict the Weather" with Heather Freeland

Heather Freeland from Penn State's Master Gardening Group will explore the fascinating ways plants protect themselves through changing weather and what those natural responses can reveal about the conditions ahead. She'll explain how certain plant behaviors act as early signals of shifts in temperature, moisture, and storms. Heather will also share practical examples and easy ways to observe these patterns, helping you better understand the environment around you and how plants adapt to it





News from Camp Swatara

Registration is now OPEN!!!

2026 Summer Camp Theme: Into the Wilderness, Matthew 4:4

<https://www.campswatara.org/resident>

Don't miss out on the \$25 Early Bird Discount which runs until March 31, 2026.

Camp Swatara - Help Wanted

Begin your journey as part of the Camp Swatara staff community which includes leadership opportunities in communication, team-work, group dynamics, specific skill development, and being a mentor and role model. These contribute to strengthening you as a person, preparing and sharpening you for your future . . . AND, having a pocket of time to build into the lives of the campers who come to Camp Swatara.

We're hiring for the summer beginning at 14 years old and have positions in Counseling, Buildings & Grounds, Housekeeping, and Pool & Waterfront. Don't have a full summer to be with us - come serve for a week or two.

Staff & Volunteer Applications for 2026 are ready for you to APPLY!!

<https://www.campswatara.org/employment-opportunities>



Paul Bunyan Day
Saturday, April 11, 2026
8:00 AM

Volunteers needed to cut firewood for the upcoming camping season!
Lunch provided for those who RSVP to Liam
RSVP Online: Liam@campswatara.org

5K RUN & WALK



Saturday, April 18, 2026

Registration: 7:30 AM or register online at www.campswatara.org

Race: 9:00 AM 5K Run

9:05 AM 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk

For information : www.campswatara.org



Little Swatara Preschool April 2026 Newsletter



Dear Little Swatara Preschool Family and Friends,

Happy Easter and welcome to Spring! As the earth begins to wake up and the colors of the season bloom, we are excited to bring you a fresh update on all of the wonderful things that will be happening at preschool this season. Easter is an exciting and joyous time to share with our precious preschoolers. It is a beautiful opportunity to share the story of Jesus' death and resurrection and its significance in a way that the children can understand and cherish. We feel very blessed to share this special time with all of the students.

As we move closer towards the end of our school year, there is a lot happening here at LSP. We are excited to see everyone for "Preschool Sunday" on April 26th and you will find more info pertaining to this on the back of this newsletter. Our Pre Kindergarten classes will be visiting Kindergarten classrooms soon and May is right around the corner which means we are planning our class field trips to Camp Swatara!

This year has been an amazing time with each of your wonderful children and we cherish the time we have left in this school year. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in nurturing your child's faith and academic life. We wish you and your family a blessed and joyful Easter season filled with peace, love, and the light of Jesus Christ.

Blessings and love,

Miss Sara 



"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said." Matthew 28:6

Class Easter Celebrations

Just a little reminder that each of our 4 classes will have their own egg hunt and classroom Easter celebrations. Thank you for signing up to help provide goodies and supplies and for making their parties so very special.

Preschool 1 Easter Celebration: April 1st

Preschool 2 Easter Celebration: April 2nd

PreKindergarten 1 & 3: April 2nd



There are no classes on Friday, April 3rd as we are closed in observance of Good Friday. We have snow make up days scheduled for Preschool 1 and PreK 1 & 3. A letter was sent home regarding the dates for these days. Please let your child's teacher or Miss Sara know if your child will not be in attendance on our make up days. Thank you!

Important Dates

We have some important upcoming dates to share. Each of our classes will have an end of the year field trip to **Camp Swatara** where they will enjoy a picnic, hike, and playground fun.

Preschool 1: May 13th

Preschool 2: May 12th

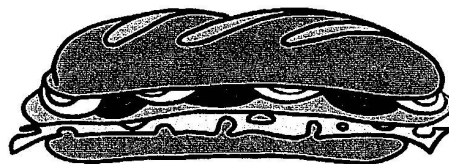
PreK 1: May 11th

PreK 3: May 11th

The Pre Kindergarten students will also visit one of two **Kindergarten** classes. Those that are signed up to visit Penn Bernville Elementary will go on April 10th and those that signed up to visit Bethel Elementary will go on April 24th . We look forward to a fun time of learning!

Spring Sub Sale Fundraiser

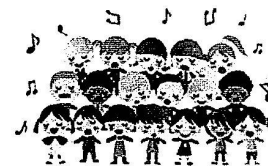
The Preschool Board of Directors is sponsoring a Sub Sale through R&K Subs. The selling period will be from 3/30-4/14. All orders will be delivered to the church on April 23rd and must be picked up by each selling family between 11:15 a.m.—12:45 p.m. Seller packets will be sent home in your child's backpack. Thank you for participating in this fundraising effort that helps us fund field trips, purchase classroom supplies and special gifts for the children. We appreciate your support so very much!



Just a reminder that our classes are filling up quickly for the 2026/27 school year. Please be sure to submit your enrollment application as soon as possible so we can accommodate your class choices to the best of our ability. If you are in need of another application, please see Miss Sara or visit our website at littleswatara.org/preschool. Our PreK 1 class is now closed but we still have limited available spots in our PreK 3 class as well as our Preschool 1 & 2 classes.




Preschool Sunday April 26, 2026



Little Swatara Church of the Brethren has invited all of the Preschool children to sing special music during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. It is a wonderful morning as all of the classes sing together to praise God. We will be practicing our songs during circle time to provide this time of praise and song. All of our preschool families (and their extended families!) are invited to attend this service. Please sign up on the sheet posted in the classroom hallways or email Miss Sara if you plan to attend on April 26th (sara.bryant@littleswatara.org). We will be sending home more specific information regarding arrival and our meeting location later this month. Please consider being a part of this memorable day! Thank you!

April 2026

29 Easter Festival Palm Sunday Services	30	31	1 10:00 AM Seated Exercise class / FH 8:45 am women's exercise class / FH 6:00pm Family Movie Night / FH 7:15pm Praise Team Practice	2 8:30am Quilting 7:00pm Senior Choir Practice 7:45pm Bell Choir practice	3 7:30pm Good Friday Service	4 10:00am Lester Bashore memorial service
5 Easter Service	6	7 7:00pm LEADERSHIP TEAM Mtg	8 10:00 AM Seated Exercise class / FH 8:45 am women's exercise class / FH 7:15pm Praise Team Practice	9 8:30am Quilting 6:00pm 50+ club mtg/FH 7:00pm Senior Choir Practice 7:45pm Bell Choir practice	10	11
12 Food Pantry Collection	13	14 11:30am Widows Luncheon/Ctry Fare	15 10:00 AM Seated Exercise class / FH 8:45 am women's exercise class / FH Newsletter Deadline 7:15pm Praise Team Practice	16 8:30am Quilting 9:30am Packing food bags for Bethel Food Pantry / Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethel 7:00pm Senior Choir Practice 7:45pm Bell Choir practice	17  8:00am Feed Them / Kitchen 3:00pm Bethel Food Pantry	18
19 Congregational Potluck Meal following church service	20 7:00pm Music & Worship Team meeting	21 9:00am women's fellowship meeting / FH	22 10:00 AM Seated Exercise class / FH 8:45 am women's exercise class / FH 7:15pm Praise Team Practice	23 8:30am Quilting 7:00pm Senior Choir Practice 7:45pm Bell Choir practice	24	25 7:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast / Cafe
26 Preschool Sunday	27	28 Ministry Team Minutes Due	29 10:00 AM Seated Exercise class / FH 8:45 am women's exercise class / FH 7:15pm Praise Team Practice	30 8:30am Quilting 6:00pm Preschool Board meeting 7:00pm Senior Choir Practice 7:45pm Bell Choir practice	1	2