



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

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"Routines "

If you're anything like me, you have daily routines. Those routines define our day. They keep us on track; if you will. So, as summer winds down and our travels start to halt, the kids make their way back to school, another routine seems to set in. It's the practice of church attendance. You have no idea how much we miss you when you're gone. I've had routines disturbed lately with this funny thing called vertigo. If you're aware how that affects your day, you can understand. Thankfully, I've learned mechanisms to reset my crystals. That moment has a way of defining me. I'm not who I was. I find myself less coherent and that routine I was part of has to take a momentary pause. Perhaps there's times in your life where you just need to take time to center and focus on what's right in front of you. I often joke with Denise this was his way of getting my attention. We find ourselves in such routines, we can miss what matters most. I'm referring here to his love and care. Sounds indifferent to the Christian life, but it happens. We're caught up in what needs done next, the child in front of us needing our full attention is neglected, the man in line in front of us crying, is forsaken. I'm convinced we're entertaining angels when we least expect it. So, I don't know how your routine affects you when it gets off course, but may this be a gentle reminder, to be mindful of the divine interruptions therein. May the summer end with a renewed commitment to the routine of being with the body of Christ on Sunday morning. God be with you.

Blessings :-)

Pastor Matt Christ



Christopher Merkey	1	John Kelly	8	Arlene Sweitzer	22
Herbert Miller, Jr	1	Jennifer Manbeck	8	Brenda S. Hershey	24
Denise Bohn	2	Laura Stevens	9	Jenna Baez	24
Andrew S. Brubaker	2	Martin Bashore	10	Linda Wanner	24
Dane Haupt	2	Dakota Himmelberger	11	JoAnn Arnold	25
Deneen Ebling	4	Sharon D. Hoke	11	Ava Blatt	26
Maxine Wengert	4	Wenda Dinatale	12	Louanne M. Boltz	26
Donna Reber	6	James Manbeck	13	Enos Loump	26
Jeffrey Frantz	6	Scot A. Snyder	13	Eugene Yenser	27
Wanda Townsend	8	Randy Corbin	14	Donna Schwalm	28
		Pamela Gerberich	16	Jean A. Wise-Eberly	28
		Randy Zimmerman	16	Dale Bechtold	31
		Tessa Hershberger	21	Abigail Christ	31
		Ronald Lebo	22	Gregory R. Mill	31
		Lydia Stupp	22		

Our Sincere Sympathy

Please hold the family and friends of Kenneth Bashore in prayer. Kenneth went to be with his Lord and Savior on June 20th, 2025.

Our deepest sympathy and prayers for Lauren & Linda Cass on the loss of Lauren's mother, June Cass, who passed away on June 24th, 2025

Please hold the family and friends of Rae Derr in prayer. Rae went to be with her Lord and Savior on July 2nd, 2025



Births

Congratulations to Devin Emerich & Brooke Hoffman on the birth of their daughter, Amelia Lynn, born on May 25th. Grandparents Gary Lee & Jennifer Emerich and Great-Grandparents, Gary & Sally Emerich.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 5 5 PM National Night Out
- 7 8:30 AM Quilting
- 10 10:30 AM Anointing Service
Food Pantry collection
3 PM "Days of Old" concert / sanct.
- 11 7 PM Every Member Council meeting
- 12 11:30 AM Widows' Luncheon / Ctry Fare
- 14 8:30 AM Quilting
9:30 AM packing food bags for Bethel Food Pantry / Salem Evang. Luth. Ch.
- 15 8 AM Feed Them / kitchen
3:00 PM Bethel Food Pantry
- 18 5 PM Preschool Meet the Teacher Night
- 19 9 AM Women's Fellowship mtg / FH
5 PM Preschool Meet the Teacher Night
- 20 Newsletter Deadline
- 21 8:30 AM Quilting
- 23 7 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast / café
- 24 Promotion Sunday
- 25 9 AM Preschool starts
- 26 Ministry Team Minutes due
- 28 8:30 AM Quilting

Information Updates from Little Swatara

2025 Organization Officers

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

2025 Committee Chairs

Stewardship & Property - Jamie Wise
 Christian Education - Abigail Christ
 Missions & Evangelism - Sharon Dosch
 Spiritual Nurture Ministry - Gary Bashore
 Music and Worship - Allen Rebman



Summer Worship

Sundays in July & August are for sunshine, fellowship, and worship! Whether you're here every week or dropping in between vacations, we'd love to see you.

8:30 AM – "Off the Hook" service / FH
 10:30 AM – traditional service / sanctuary

Reminder:

Exercise classes will be on summer break during July and August



The Gathering Place Cafe

is in need of volunteers. Contact Patty Timmins if you can help with this important ministry of Little Swatara to the community of Bethel.

Help Needed

The Audio/Video Committee is looking for volunteers

Audio, projection, live streaming, lighting
 No experience necessary, we will train!
 See Todd Rebman if interested in helping



Church Treasurer Wanted!

Are you organized, trustworthy, and have a heart for service? Our church is seeking a **dedicated Treasurer** to help steward our financial resources with integrity and care.

Responsibilities include:

- Managing budgets and financial records
- Overseeing donations and expenses
- Preparing reports for church leadership

Accounting experience preferred.

This part-time paid position is perfect for someone who wants to support the church's mission in our community.

Join the Little Swatara team---apply today!
Contact Jamie Wise for more information.

Answer D (See 2 Samuel 4:4; 9:1-7; 21:7.)



Lunch N Learn @ Londonderry Village

August 14 - "JUBILEE MINISTRIES & THEIR AFTERCARE PROGRAM"

Join Matt Hershey through an exploration of the spiritual significance of Jubilee Ministries' logo, explaining how its meaning is rooted in Scripture. Matt will also discuss Jubilee's chaplaincy work in prisons and the aftercare programs that support individuals and families as they transition back into society.

RSVP and/or Order Lunch Here: <https://bit.ly/3ZrsUgf>

AUGUST EVERY MEMBER COUNCIL MEETING

The Every Member Council Meeting will be held on **Monday, August 11th at 7:00 PM** in the church sanctuary

The agenda for this meeting:

1. 2nd Quarter financial report
2. Pastor Matt's report
3. Gathering Place report
4. 2026 LSCOB Ministry Call Slate
5. Ministry Team updates
6. Preschool Report

Business:

Constitution and By-laws of The Little Swatara Church Of The Brethren Revised May 9, 2022 recommended changes.

- a. Motion to change the "Quorum" paragraph in Article IV Section III A on page 9 to change from 25 members to 15 members.
- b. Motion to change Article VI Leadership Team Section I A Composition of the Leadership Team on page 11, to remove the treasurer position from the team.



Date and time: Fri, Aug 15, 2025, 4:00 PM - Sat, Aug 16, 2025, 4:00 PM

Location: Camp Swatara, 2905 Camp Swatara Rd, Bethel, PA 19507

Speaker: Ann Bach

"Fill My Cup, O Lord"

Organizer: Kelly Bernstein, (717) 367-4730, kbernstein@ane-cob.org

Registration: closes August 1st

All women are welcome to join in this weekend of worship, Bible study, singing, hiking, crafts, canoeing, swimming and more!

"Faith is to believe what we do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what we believe."

—St. Augustine

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



Christian Ed Opportunities

Please consider serving the following ministries of Little Swatara Church of the Brethren.

- Nursery Childcare provider in nursery
- Preschool Sunday School Helper
- Extended Session
- VBS Committee Member
- Youth Advisor
- Adult Sunday School Teacher

All volunteers with children and youth must complete an application. Complete the required clearances, and submit a signed acknowledgement to Abby Christ, Sue Hartranft, Melissa Emerich, Sara Bryant, or Deb Wengert, if you are willing to fill one of our needs!

WIDOWS



LUNCHEON

The next Widows luncheon will be

**Tuesday, August 12th
11:30 a.m.**

The Country Fare
Restaurant

Did you Know?

The offering collected during Sunday School helps Christian Ed with

Vacation Bible School expenses, the Lenten and Advent devotionals, Bible presentations, the Easter Festival, Children's Day entertainment, the Christmas Children's Outreach among many other things. Please consider the benefits to these ministries when considering your Sunday School offering.



Camp Swatara Labor Day Auction

Camp Swatara needs your help with the Annual Family Camp Auction! We want to make this auction the best yet! We are looking for individuals, SS classes, family groups, etc., who would be willing to donate something. Theme gift baskets are always a winner! Do you have a talent for painting, pottery, sewing, woodworking, etc.? Birdhouses and bird feeders are popular! We need items for the Children's Auction, too! Do you have a service you could share? Think outside the box! Remember 100% of donations from the auction benefit Family Camp at Camp Swatara. There are no administration costs, it is organized and run by volunteers. We will be glad to pick up your donation, just give us a call to make arrangements. Date of the auction is Saturday, August 30, 2025 at 9:00 am in the East Lodge at Camp Swatara. Children's auction is Friday, August 29, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Bible Quiz

For years, King David showed special kindness to the son of King Saul's son Jonathan, because David and Jonathan had been dear friends. Which of the following statements is *not* accurate?

- A. The name of King Saul's grandson was Mephibosheth.
- B. He was lame in both feet.
- C. His feet had been injured when he was 5.
- D. He was injured while playing with his brothers.



Answer on page 3



August Mission of the Month

The August Mission of the Month will support COBYS (Church of the Brethren Youth Services).

Motivated by Christian Faith, COBYS Family Service educates, supports and empowers children and adults to reach their full potential. For more than 40 years COBYS has been carrying out this mission by providing safe and loving homes for children through foster care and adoption services; helping children and adults overcome challenges through counseling; and leading family life education programs teaching skills and principles to parents, teens and children so families can become all that God intended them to be.

Thank You to all who came to the playground dedication. We had a wonderful evening of fun, food and fellowship.



Considering becoming a part of the Little Swatara congregation and not sure where to start? See Pastor Matt, text or call him, stop by his office. He'd love to share

how you can do this in the coming months.

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Tue. & Thurs. 9:00 am - 12:00pm

Wed. 11:00 am - 2:00 pm



Our next Women's Fellowship Meeting will be Tuesday, August 19th, 2025 at 9:00 A.M.

Upcoming Events:

COBYS Bike & Hike: September 7, 2025.

Brethren Disaster Relief Auction: September 26 and 27, 2025.

Breakfast Buffet: October 18, 2025 7-10 AM

Annual Christmas Bazaar: November 1, 2025 from 8:00 - 1:00

Women's Christmas Brunch: November 15, 2025 from 9:00 - 11:30 at the Cottage at Country Fare.

"Forever is composed of nows."

—Emily Dickinson

Bethel-Tulpehocken Public Library

Tuesday, August 12th at 6:00 pm

"Snow White"

Rated PG

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



August 5 - National Night Out

Bethel Fire Company grounds
5:00-8:00 PM

August 23 - Country Fair

Mt. Aetna Fire Company grounds
5:00-8:00 PM



PLAYGROUND UPDATE

About a year ago, Pastor Matt had an idea of having a playground for younger kids since the swings and slide were geared towards older kids. We decided to look into a playground for toddlers/preschool age.

Once we presented the idea to the congregation, we told them that this project was not a budgeted item and will only be done once enough funding was available. A few weeks after being presented I was told that Ann Gruber wanted to donate funds for the playground in memory of her parents, Carl and Faye Balsbaugh.

Carl and Faye were members of our church and enjoyed activities and having fun. They were also deacons and enjoyed serving others. I'm sure that they would be proud knowing that their funds are going towards the young at heart.

Since their donation was covering all of the play equipment, that meant finding the right playset and then a vote on the color was happening faster than I thought. With financial support from the congregation members, we raised enough money to cover installation expenses.

We knew we had some talented members in our church that could help build the playground but there were some things that set us back a few steps. Who knew at the time that we were building on a shale hill, which took some extra digging and time. Then winter weather set in and we had to wait till this spring.

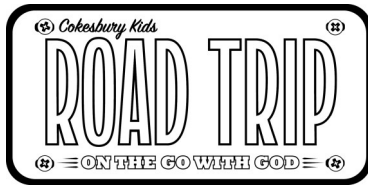
We had a good working crew of Andrew Brubaker, Jeremiah Fake, John Kauffman, Gary Bashore, John High, Lucas Rebman and myself. We worked several Saturday mornings and some week nights to install the playground.

Once everything was installed, level and concrete was set, now was time to mulch and work on the grading and planting of grass. With additional help from, Chelsa, Chloe, Trevor, and Alivia Brubaker, Allen Rebman and Gary Emerich with his big backhoe, we moved 42 yards of playground mulch and about 12 tons of topsoil and seeded and spread straw to keep the moisture in over about 2.5 hours one week night.

We are taking a break right now since summer weather is here and we are spending time with family, but we have more plans with the extra fundings available. This fall we hope to remove the other mulch and install new mulch plus install a sitting bench for parents to sit and relax while the kids play.

I want to personally say thank you to all our volunteers who helped in building, and supporting us with funds for this project. We had many good laughs and had fun while installing this for the kids.

Thank you
Todd Rebman



ROAD TRIP "On the go with God"

2025 VBS Wrap-Up

What a great week we had at Vacation Bible School. The Travelers learned the Green Light Verse "The Lord your God is with you wherever you go" Joshua 1:9

They also learned the Mile Markers to help them learn different ways that God is with you wherever you go.

Session 1: God is with us on the journey.

Session 2: God is with us when we go off course.

Session 3: God is with us when we are joyful.

Session 4: God is with us when we are lonely.

Session 5: God is with us near or far.

It was a busy week on our Road Trip. Friday, we had VBS at Camp Swatara so the VBS families could experience Camp Swatara for themselves.

The Mission Project for VBS week was Brethren Disaster Relief Fund, to help rebuild areas where natural disasters have happened. The Travelers were also able to help make disaster buckets that will be sent to help those in need.

Thank you to all of the Board Members, leaders, helpers, students and parents. Without all of you, VBS wouldn't happen. VBS 2025 was a huge success!

108 students

46 helpers

Lifelong Learners

"If you don't have wisdom that goes with knowledge, you are only a walking encyclopedia," wrote Jack Wellman, a Kansas pastor. "A book of knowledge is useless without the wisdom to know how to apply that knowledge. ... Information without transformation leads only to frustration."

Consider the many benefits of wisdom – and how you can use what you've acquired to serve God, your church and your community. To better fulfill your calling, what wisdom might you yet need to acquire?

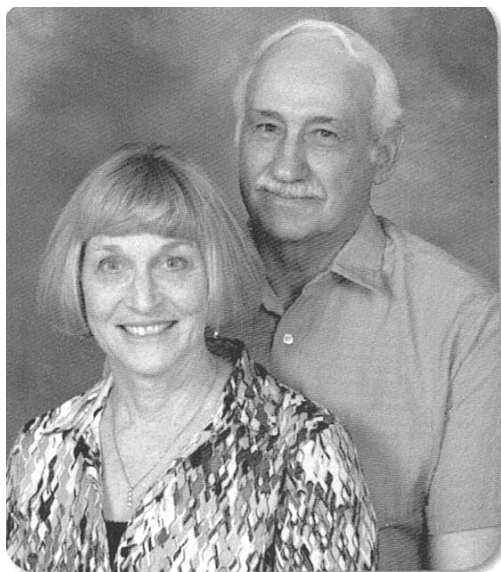
As another school year begins, here's a prayer for students of all ages: All-wise, all-knowing God, make us willing learners and seekers of your wisdom, not for the gain of knowledge for its own sake, but that we might handle every situation we face with the wisdom of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

—adapted from *The Wired Word*



"Mrs. Moore expects us to gain a firm grasp of our Sunday school lessons. See? Rosin."

How well do you know.....



Gary & Sally Emerich

Gary was born on September 10, 1950 to Paul and Betty Spitler Emerich. Siblings are Diane Feathers (Deceased), Louise Graby, Denise Bohn and Dennis. Gary was raised on the family farm that he and Sally now live on and so was his mother, Betty. The farm has been in the Emerich and Spitler family for well over a hundred years. About the age of 5, Gary was outside riding his tricycle when he noticed the house was on fire. No one was injured and the farm house was rebuilt.

Gary attended Tulpehocken School District. He worked for Shellhammers Garage in Myerstown as a mechanic for about 6 years, then took a job with Penn Line as a lineman until they moved out of the area. He then became a Diesel Mechanic for W. C. McQuaide until his retirement in May of 2016. In his spare time, he worked the farmland, which was more a hobby than a job to him!

Sally was born on May 3, 1952 to Harry Frantz Krick and Dorothy Brightbill Krick. She grew up in Myerstown and had 3 sisters, Susan, JoAnn and the late Judith as well as 1 brother, Steven. She graduated from Elco in 1970 where she performed as a majorette in the Elco Marching Band.

They met through a cousin of Sally's when Gary questioned him after seeing Sally walking to school and as Sally says, "so the story began." Her first job during high school was at the Mary Elton Restaurant where she was a cook, waitress and dish washer. She began to notice how often Gary came to the restaurant. Was it for the food or a favorite waitress? They were married October 14, 1970 on the 25th wedding anniversary of Sally's parents.

They have been blessed, as Sally puts it, with 2 wonderful sons, Gary Lee and Greg; 4 Grandchildren, Nicole, Rebecca and Devin (Gary Lee's children) and Brendon (Greg's son); 3 Great Grandchildren, Benjamin, Callum and Amelia. Sally was a stay-at-home Mom until their boys started school. Then she went to work at the Tulpehocken School District in 1983 as a cook in the cafeteria, retiring in 2014 after 30 plus years. At present, Sally is babysitting the Great Grandchildren, a job she loves. She says, "The farm is a special place to us and our family, couldn't have had a better place to raise a family!"

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Gary and his family worshiped at the Schubert Meeting House in his younger day and then Little Swatara. Sally was confirmed at the Friends Lutheran Church in Myerstown and also attended the Myerstown Brethren Church.

When the late Faye Balsbaugh (who went to Sally's mother's beauty shop) learned that Sally and Gary were getting married, she convinced them to move their membership to Little Swatara Church of the Brethren. They were baptized on April 20, 1975, became members and have made Little Swatara their church home since. Neither one shared how much they have done and still do for Little Swatara. Sally taught Sunday School and always helped with Vacation Bible School until 2023. She volunteers at The Gathering Place. When you need to reserve a table for the annual Christmas Bazaar or the Tractor Show, you can count on Sally to take your reservation and set up the tables for all the vendors. She serves as treasurer for the Women's Fellowship. When there is lunch following a funeral service, you will find her in the kitchen. She makes the delicious fruit salad along with all the other duties. Many times, you will see Gary helping Sally whenever an extra hand is needed. Our church has been blessed with their attitude of servanthood.

In their spare time, they have taken a few cruises, one to Alaska, which they really enjoyed. Sally enjoys beach time and both enjoy going upstate to Dennis's place in Sullivan County.

Spending time with the family is at the top of their list but right next to family time certainly is "church time."

~ Jean Myers

The Meaning of Membership

Oklahoma pastor Ricky Jones tackles the meaning of church membership, or being part of Christ's body. "Leaving the church is not simply leaving a club," he writes at the Gospel Coalition website. "When you walk away, you dismember yourself from the body. Jesus and the rest of the body sorely miss you, and bleed after your departure. You cut yourself off from your only source of life and nourishment. Like an amputated hand, you will slowly bleed out, wither, and die."

Jones contends that "being a part of the universal church without submitting to a local church is not possible, biblical or healthy." It's impossible because you need to be part of a smaller community before you can be considered part of a greater community. It's unbiblical because the New Testament epistles are addressed to specific local churches. And it's unhealthy because wanting to independently make your own choices is "at the heart of sin," the pastor writes.

"You need to know we're all in this life together, and we won't walk away from you just because you let us down or we disagree," says Jones. "Together we build each other up into the image of Christ; no one can make it alone."

DAYS of OLD



August 10, 3pm



"Days of Old" is a band of family and friends from the Mohrsville Church of the Brethren who have been playing traditional bluegrass and gospel music together for more than ten years. They will be joining us for an afternoon evening of fun, music, and a little inspiration.



August 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Bread & Cup Communion J. Hartman - pavilion (Bob Lingle)	28 7:00am floor waxing downstairs	29 7:00am floor waxing upstairs	30 7:00am flo	31 8:30am Quilting	1	2 4:00pm 50+ club mtg/ Kauffman Barbeque
3 Spiritual Nurture meeting 11:30am Farm Women #2 / Pav Heather Forry	4	5 5:00pm National Night Out 7:00pm LEADERSHIP TEAM Mtg	6	7 8:30am Quilting	8	9 J & D High / pav
10 Anointing Service Food pantry collection Tilden/Edris reunion (Fern & D Gensemer) 3:00pm Days of Old concert / sanctuary - 3PM	11 7:00pm Every Member Council Meeting	12 11:30am Widows Luncheon/Ctry Fare	13	14 8:30am Quilting 9:30am Packing food bags for Bethel Food Pantry / Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethel	15  8:00am Feed Them / Kitchen 3:00pm Bethel Food Pantry	16
17 11:00am James & Holly Manback / reunion	18 5:00pm Preschool meet the Teacher Night / narthex & classrooms	19 9:00am women's fellowship meeting / FH 5:00pm Preschool meet the Teacher Night / Lobby & classrooms	20 Newsletter Deadline	21 8:30am Quilting	22	23 7:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast / Cafe 5:00pm Country Fair
24 Promotion Sunday 7:00am Gobble - Keeney Reunion / pav (Ray & Sandra Keeney)	25 9:00am Preschool Starts	26 Ministry Team Minutes Due	27	28 8:30am Quilting	29	30
31	1 	2 7:00pm LEADERSHIP TEAM Mtg	3	4 8:30am Quilting 6:00pm 50+ club mtg/FH	5	6