

The Ambassador

St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church
1748 S. Clinton Ave. Trenton NJ 08610
www.stbartlutheran.net
(609)393-6060 (office)



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From The Pastor's Desk

Dear People of Saint Bart's,

"It was the best of times, it was the worst times," Charles Dickens writes at the beginning of his classic novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and it's hard not to see a similar duality at work in the story of St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church in 2024. As a community, St. Bart's has faced many challenges over the past year, but those challenges have also shown just how much we have to be proud of (and thankful for) as a faith community.

I thank you for deeply caring about the life of this congregation. Thank you for your time, your energy, your faithfulness, your generosity, and your commitment to the mission and ministry of this church. St Bart's is not just a building; it is a family of believers committed to living out the gospel through our words and actions. Your support, through prayers, service, and financial gifts, enables us to carry out God's work in this community and beyond. Thank you for being important parts of the life of St. Bart's.

St. Bart's focus on Food Security, for example, we saw an increase in folks coming for food of the congregation's Enid's Pantry. We proudly celebrate how Enid's Pantry depends on the generosity of our volunteers and community, but we also grieve at how the pantry's growth highlights the failure of our society in terms of living out Christ's words in Matthew 25: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the creation of our new RAWtools ministry. This space, located in the parsonage, has been designed to offer a beautiful and sacred place for hope, healing, and reflection. We have been to many events this year living out the call for God's peace!

Another area of exciting growth has been our renewed commitment to mission. This year, we hosted a Lutheran presiding bishop from Angola. We have also been working with our Latine community to help facilitate and establish rapid response know your rights trainings, and congregational trainings. We are excited about the possibilities of strengthening our connection to the southward! As we get to know each other, the relationships will grow.

We are looking forward to the development of Servicio Espanol which has been an opportunity to meet our neighbors face to face...and to establish ongoing relationships that are deep and meaningful. This Saturday service has been meaningful with an attendance of 100-200 folks!

I have preached in prisons, street corners, and outside detention centers. Presided over weddings, funerals, and baptisms. I take my ordination vows seriously and will continue to serve all with the grace God has shown me.



Please contact **Pastor Erich** whenever you are in need of pastoral care or are aware of others who may be in need – Church office, 609-393-6060.

This includes:

- If you want to talk
- Emergencies
- Sickness
- Hospital
- Time of crisis when things are out of control or down time
- When someone is near death
- When there has been a birth
- When contemplating marriage



From The Pastor's Desk Continuation

This year, we will begin the work of developing a new strategic plan for our congregation. Together, we will engage in thoughtful discernment about where God is calling us in the years ahead. I'll simply say that our focus will be on deepening our discipleship, especially with children, youth and families, strengthening our ministries, and expanding our outreach. I am very excited for the next chapter of St Bart's journey.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the incredible leadership and the staff that serve St Bart's. To our church council, ministry teams, ministry leaders, volunteers, and staff, thank you. Your dedication, vision, hard work and general scrappiness, sustain and strengthen our ministries. This past year has had its challenges, but your faithfulness and commitment have ensured that through Jesus' love and the work of the Holy Spirit, St Bart's remains a place of welcome, connection, learning and service in the name of Christ our Savior.

And thank you to those who have continued to support the work of the congregation through your offerings. Everything that happens here...from turning on the lights...to people loading vans ...to providing food for families in our community through Enid's pantry ...happens because of the generous giving of God's people here.

In the end, we will remember 2025 as a time of challenges, but also as a time when our congregation—with divine grace and with the help of many, many friends—survived those challenges and continued growing into the church God has called it to be. I am filled with hope. We have been given incredible opportunities to serve, to grow, and to witness to the power of God's love. I invite you to continue praying, giving, and serving with us, knowing that God is leading us forward in faith. I am confident, that St Bart's best days are ahead of us.

May God be with you all!

In Christ

Pastor Erich

The 38th NJ Synod Assembly

"Water and Witness"

Water marks us. Witness moves us.

Greetings! The 38th New Jersey Synod Assembly will take place in person on Saturday, May 30, 2026

at the DoubleTree Somerset Hotel, 200 Atrium Dr, Somerset, NJ, under the theme "Water and

Witness." Water marks us. Witness moves us! All are welcome!

Registration will open in February

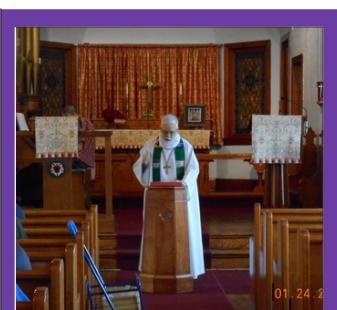
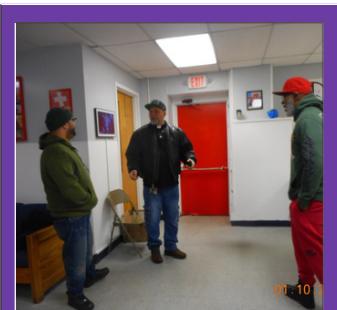


Vision Statement

"Little Church With A
BIG HEART"



Highlights



Message From Council President

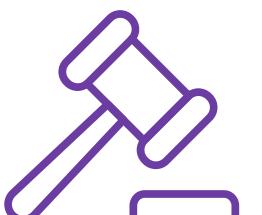
As we look ahead to 2026, I am grateful for the opportunity to reflect on another year of faithful service to our community. While there is much to celebrate, we remain mindful of one of our most pressing challenges: the continued increase in ICE encounters affecting our neighbors and families. In response, St. Bart's has remained committed to standing with and protecting our most vulnerable neighbors. We continue to work closely with Resistencia to inform and empower families during these difficult and uncertain times. This year, we added Spanish-language services on Pantry Saturdays, helping ensure greater access and inclusion for those we serve. We will also continue providing training for our volunteers so they remain informed, vigilant, and prepared to respond appropriately and safely to ICE-related concerns. I am deeply proud of the compassion and solidarity St. Bart's has shown our community throughout the year.

Despite the uncertainty impacting our neighborhoods, 2025 was a year of meaningful growth and ministry. We welcomed new members into our church family and celebrated important milestones, including three baptisms, two First Communions, a wedding, and a funeral. These moments remind us how deeply rooted St. Bart's is in the lives of those we serve. Enid's Pantry continues to grow and remains one of our most vital ministries. Over the past year, we averaged serving approximately 1,000 individuals each month, meeting a critical need with dignity and care.

We also strengthened our community partnerships, most notably with our Mercer Street friends and the Abbott Marshlands/Tulpehaking Nature Center. These collaborations continue to expand our outreach, and I look forward to what new and continued partnerships 2026 will bring.

Significant progress was made in the care and maintenance of our facilities. A new boiler was installed in the parsonage, and the front and side of the building received updated landscaping and a new rock path. Thank you to Walt for his continued dedication and hard work. The Fellowship Hall was thoroughly cleaned and reorganized by our volunteers, creating a more welcoming and functional space. Several new freezers were also added to support our ministries, and a fresh paint project is currently underway. Thank you to everyone who has invested their time and energy into the beautification and modernization of our parish. As we move into 2026, we remain grounded in our calling to be the light in the South Ward. In times of challenge and uncertainty, St. Bart's continues to shine as a place of refuge, advocacy, worship, and hope. Through our ministries, partnerships, and presence, we strive to reflect Christ's love both within our walls and throughout the wider community. Thank you to the council, our volunteers, and the entire St. Bart's community for your compassion, resilience, and faith. May we continue to walk boldly together, united in purpose and committed to serving as a beacon of compassion and justice in the year ahead.

With gratitude,
Chris Rivera
Council President



Thank You

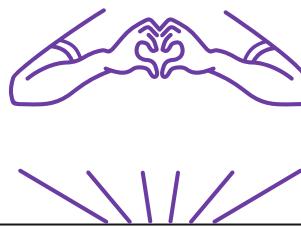
Thank you to our dedicated members who have served meals and packed grocery bags for our community in providing thousands of meals and bags of food: Brandon, Jackie, Kristen, Emely, Jim, Gay, Jamie, Tracie, Chris, Walt, and Rolf.



Thank you to ALL of our church partners for helping with the Food Pantry – Abiding Presence, Prince of Peace, and St. Paul's!



Keep in Prayer
Our Homebound Members
 Bob Farr, Billy T.,
 Carol Black, Vi Teschke



Are you receiving our weekly e-news?
 If not, please send a message to:
officestbartlutheran@gmail.com

In Memory of Babetta Polak



Congregational Birthdays

Apologies for any omission of dates.

FEBRUARY

- 8 – Barbara Schendlinger
- 8 – Judy Parish
- 10 – Walter Woodley
- 17 – Kylie Arcos
- 23 – Kaleb Arcos
- 26 – Ashley Kussman
- 26 – Kenneth Appold
- 27 – Zuleyka Concepcion

APRIL

- 8 – Billy Schendlinger
- 8 – Miguel Velez
- 14 – Alexis Russo
- 20 – Mary Ann Fues
- 22 – Tracie Bartholomew
- 29 – Carolyn Maranca

MAY

- 4 – Jacqueline Prekop
- 4 – Sharon Archer
- 25 – Marcia Good

MARCH

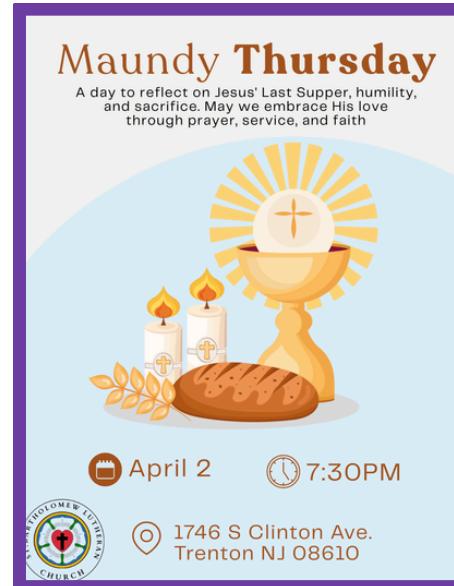
- 11 – Gay Egan
- 19 – Jo-Ann Sciarotta
- 29 – Billy Teasenfitz
- 31 – Kris Pinter
- 31 – Brandon Tecum

JUNE

- 25 – Zayan Rivera
- 29 – Rose Marie Opdyke



Church News



Worship at St.Bart's

February

17 th	- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner	6:00PM
18 th	- Ash Wednesday Service	7:30PM
25 th	- Midweek Lenten Dinner/service	6:30PM @ PoP

March

4 th	- Midweek Lenten Dinner/service	6:30PM @ St Barts
11 th	- Midweek Lenten Dinner/service	6:30PM @ PoP
18 th	- Midweek Lenten Dinner/service	6:30PM @ St Barts
25 th	- Midweek Lenten Dinner/service	6:30PM @ PoP
29 th	- Palm Sunday	11:00AM

April

2 nd	- Maundy Thursday	7:30PM
3 rd	- Good Friday Tenebrae	7:30PM
4 th	- Easter Vigil	7:30PM
5 th	- Easter Service	11:00AM



(PoP) - Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

177 Princeton Hightstown Rd, Princeton Junction, NJ, United States

Rides can be provided at 6pm leaving from church.



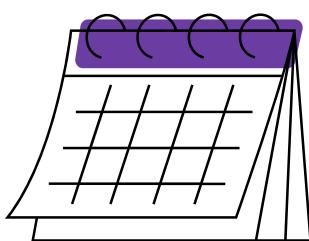
Church News Continuous

Mark Your Calendar!

Council Retreat

Saturday, February 7th

10:00AM



Volunteer Dinner

February 11th

6:30PM

Spring Cleaning Day

Saturday, April 18th

10:00AM

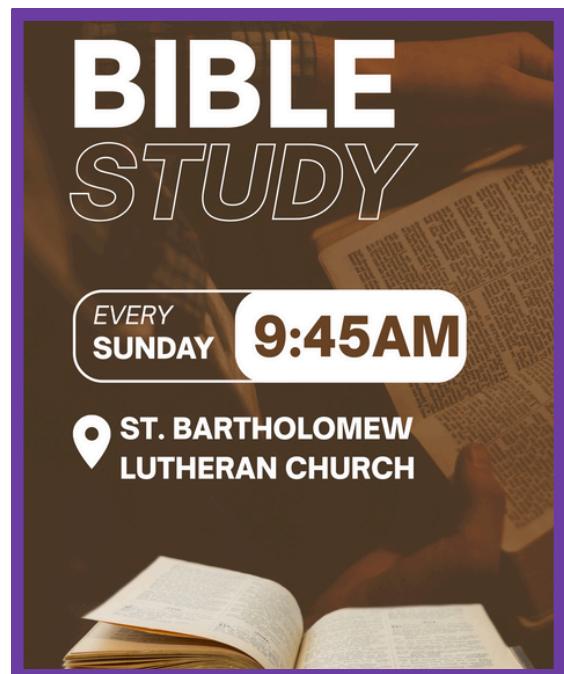
Pentecost

Sunday, May 24th

11:00AM

Trenton Thunder

Saturday, July 25th



Beginning February 22nd!

In FELLOWSHIP HALL

Bishop Challenge

TREX Recycling Project

We are approaching our goal of 1,000 pounds of soft plastics, in conjunction with Prince of Peace. Upon completion, we will receive an outdoor bench from TREX made from recycled plastic! Although we are ending our participation in this program, we will supply pallet wrap from food deliveries to Prince of Peace so they can continue collecting for their second bench. We invite our parishioners to keep recycling their soft plastics in receptacles available at many popular grocery and retail stores!

Community Service

COMMUNITY SERVICE POSSIBILITIES

Enid's Food Pantry

Running on a limited volunteer

Schedule at this time

Spring Cleaning

April 18th 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

Saint Bartholomew Lutheran Church is a community of believers that is rooted in God's unconditional grace and love, striving to share God's light of hope and salvation to scatter the darkness wherever it is found, through word and deed.

Donations Can Be Given Online!

Go to www.stbartlutheran.net and click on the donate tab!



Fellowship – Small Groups

Partnership with Abbott Marshlands

Based on our excellent response to the nature programs offered to families at St. Bart's through their community outreach, we are happy to announce that Tulpehaking Nature Center will be providing four activities this year!

Please talk to Emely or Cindy if you have ideas or would like to be part of the planning.

Martha's Breakfast

The women of St. Bart's are welcome to join our table at Pat's Diner the last Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m.

Bell Choir

A big thank you to Dawn, Brandon, Debbie and Miguel for the great job they did playing the bells on Christmas Eve. After a well deserved break, bell practice will start again on February 15 at 9:30 AM. We hope to play some times during Lent and will be looking forward to playing on Easter. If you are interested in playing bells, please talk to Barb Schendliger. You don't have to be able to read music, but you do need to be committed to our Sunday morning practices. – Barb Schendliger

Enid's Pantry and Food Missions

Message From Our Pantry Coordinator

This past year Enid's Pantry has grown. We have been very busy doing our best to reach out to as many people as possible. This doesn't mean just giving out food. Knowing that we have been faced with the dangers of ICE we worked closely with Resistencia en Accion NJ. They, along with Faith in NJ, set up training for our volunteers so we can all be better equipped to serve and protect our community members should ICE come to our church.

Many of you know that in September we joined Mercer Street Friends food bank. This has been such a wonderful experience for the pantry. We have increased the amount of food that we distribute and we now offer frozen foods as well. We are required to keep records on how much we use/hand out but it also shows that the need is great.

Although we are giving out more we still ask for donations because there are times when the Mercer Street Friends food runs out. Even if the food doesn't run out we are supplied with different items each month so it is nice to have a variety of food to give. Here you can see how food insecurity is a growing issue.

Below is the number of people served in our pantry and outdoor Farmer's Market/Pop up pantry;

	2024	2025
Enid's Pantry	2,486	2,619
Farmer's Market.	4,340	4,383
Thanksgiving Turkeys	214	235

With numbers growing and the fact that many of our community members walk, the pantry committee held its first yard sale with the intent of buying carts for those that don't have one and have to walk distances. We held the yard sale this past fall and hoped to raise a few hundred dollars. We were very surprised when the total raised came to \$1,680. This gave us the opportunity to purchase the carts as well as purchasing another needed freezer for the pantry and allowed us to use money to have the fellowship hall painted to keep it looking clean and up to date.

We at St. Bartholomew have been blessed over and over. I would like to thank all of our friends that contribute to the pantry; those that stock shelves, pack bags, send monetary donations, collect and deliver food goods and those that give of their Saturdays to help run the pantry. Without you this ministry would not be possible. God Bless you all.

Yours through Christ,
Jackie Prekop



Upcoming Events



EASTER VIGIL

April 4th 2026 7:30PM

1746 S. Clinton Ave
Trenton NJ 08610

St. Bartholomew
Lutheran Church

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH



ATTENTION
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Lutherans have been in the news this week!
PROTECT YOURSELF!

IF YOU HAVE THESE SYMPTOMS...

YOU MIGHT BE LUTHERAN!

- If you serve people in need first and ask questions later... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**
- If you care about what happens to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**
- If your "religious" activities include feeding hungry people, housing those in need, and supporting those who are powerless... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**
- If you believe second chances are unlimited... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**
- If you think everyone's story matters... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**
- If you can only imagine following a God who loves everyone... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**
- If you want to belong without having to pretend... **YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN!**

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH



St. Bart's Spring Cleaning

Join us for our spring cleaning!!!
(Breakfast is provided!!!)

April 18th, 2026 10:00 AM

1746 S Clinton Ave.
Trenton NJ 08610

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

stbartlutheran.net St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church st.bartlutheran



SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER

Join us for a delicious pancake dinner and burning of the palms.

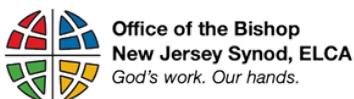
Feb. 17th 6PM

1746 S. Clinton Ave.
Trenton NJ 08610

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

honey berry

Letter From Bishop Compton



January 28, 2026

Dear Siblings in Christ of the New Jersey Synod,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, who is our light and our salvation.

My heart cannot keep pace with the news. Each day I feel the whiplash turns from hope to grief to anger to resolve. I often find myself holding all of these feelings at once. Perhaps you do too.

This Sunday in the Revised Common Lectionary we hear Matthew's version of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). You'll notice that the word "righteousness" appears more than once: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled... Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." As I consider what is happening in Minnesota, in Maine, and throughout our own state, I wonder: What might righteousness look like in this moment?

Yesterday was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Many people during the Holocaust watched as their Jewish neighbors were rounded up; some even conspired to turn over their neighbors to the German authorities. Others, however, made a different choice. They risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbors by hiding them, providing for their needs, and aiding their escape. Those courageous few are called by our Jewish siblings "the Righteous Among the Nations," and they are remembered today as faithful friends at a time when the risks of helping were dire. Sometimes righteousness looks like risking our own safety to protect the safety of the most vulnerable.

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in his 1939 volume *Life Together* that one of the most important ways we live as the body of Christ is in the ministry of bearing. As Galatians 6:2 reminds us, "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Bonhoeffer explains: "It is the fellowship of the Cross to experience the burden of the other...To bear the burden of the other person means involvement with the created reality of the other." Bonhoeffer's teaching urges us to understand what our immigrant neighbors, our neighbors of color, and our indigenous neighbors are experiencing each and every day. When we understand that lived reality, we cannot help but respond with love and compassion. Sometimes righteousness looks like holding a deep empathy that guides our daily actions.

In this moment many of our neighbors are living in fear. They are afraid to leave their homes, afraid to go to school or work, afraid to seek medical care, afraid to come to church. We are called to stand with them in whatever ways we can – to console, to provide what is needed, to accompany people to school and work, to deliver groceries to our neighbors' doors, to defend them against pervasive violence, to advocate for a just approach to immigration reform in our country. Sometimes righteousness looks like finding the one next faithful step that we can take on behalf of our neighbors. It is easy to feel helpless and overwhelmed. So here are some other faithful steps we can take. No one person can do everything, but each of us can do something. We remember in all of this work that we are not the saviors. Jesus is our Lord and Savior, the One who gives his life so that we are freed to love and serve all people.

Continuation Letter From Bishop Compton

- Pray, pray, and pray some more. Pray for those being persecuted, and pray for those who are doing the persecuting. Pray for those in authority, that they might make decisions guided by wisdom and compassion.
- Study God's Word and what it has to say about welcoming the stranger and about our vocations as citizens. The ELCA social message on Immigration and our new ELCA social statement on "Faith and Civic Life" are helpful resources. (See links below.)
- Reject any language that dehumanizes people, remembering that all of us are created in God's image. See below for a link to a document titled "Created in the Image of God: Affirming our Shared Dignity."
- Communicate with your elected representatives and urge them to make decisions that are consistent with the commitments of our faith.
- Connect with local experts and networks of care. Now is the time to strengthen our relationships with each other, with ecumenical and interfaith partners, and with organizations in our community who already know the most effective approaches to locally-based communication and advocacy.
- Seek moments of beauty, joy, and connection. The ministry of bearing one another's burdens can be exhausting. Make sure you are finding ways for your soul to be nourished.

Among our ELCA Worship Resources is a "Blessing and Sending for Public Witness." In closing, I offer this prayer, adapted from that resource:

Blessed are you, O Holy One, for you formed us in love, claimed us in baptism, and set us free for lives of service and witness. Strengthen us to fulfill the promises of baptism—to proclaim Christ through word and deed, to care for others and the world you made, and to work for justice and peace. Bless those who accompany others with compassion. Let our steady presence be a shelter in weary places, and our faithful witness be a sign of your solidarity with all who suffer. To you, O God, Source of life, Companion on the way, Fire of the Spirit, be all glory and praise, now and forever. Amen.

With prayer and hope,

The Rev. Dr. Christa M. Compton, Bishop
ccompton@njsynod.org

Letter From Bishop Curry



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

"Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1:17).

Alongside our siblings in Christ in Minneapolis and throughout Minnesota and all who have been impacted by aggressive immigration enforcement and violence by federal law enforcement agents, I mourn the shocking shooting death of Renee Nicole Good by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent on Jan. 7, 2026. I join calls for a thorough investigation into this case, accountability for the shooting and a de-escalation of ICE enforcement across the United States. Alongside the Lutherans who have held vigils in Minneapolis and around the country, our church prays for God's peace in this community and justice in this case.

The ELCA is committed to upholding and guaranteeing basic human rights for the safety of migrants and their families. Our church works toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the United States. We decry language that dehumanizes immigrants who are beloved children of God and escalates tensions between federal agents and communities. Surges of immigration enforcement and violent encounters like we are seeing in Minneapolis — as well as in Chicago; Atlanta; Los Angeles; Portland, Ore.; and Washington, D.C. — have indiscriminately targeted our neighbors, creating fear and uncertainty. This has created conditions where immigrants, those accompanying them and federal agents are all at risk.

ELCA social teaching provides guidance in complex situations: "Public safety depends upon trust in law enforcement to respect and protect the rights of all" ("Gun-related Violence and Trauma"). As a church, we are concerned by the trend of law enforcement and federal agents involved in immigration enforcement relying on the use of force in our communities without sufficient accountability or oversight.

God calls us to be witnesses to God's presence, healing and hope. I invite ongoing prayers, vigils and advocacy for peace and justice, and I affirm the ELCA's "pledge to continue our church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants" (For Peace in God's World).

In Christ,
The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Resources are available from the ELCA's migration strategy AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities).

Order Form



I would like to order _____ (how many) Lilies in **memory/honor** (circle one) of

(print name as you would like it printed on the **PURPLE** line)

Cost is \$15.00

Plants may be picked up after the 11AM Easter Day Worship Service

Your Name _____ Donation Enclosed _____

Return by Sunday **March 15th**. Please make checks payable to "**St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church**"

I would like to order _____ (how many) Daffodils in **memory/honor** (circle one) of

(print name as you would like it printed on the **PURPLE** line)

Cost is \$15.00

Plants may be picked up after the 11AM Easter Day Worship Service

Your Name _____ Donation Enclosed _____

Return by Sunday **March 15th**. Please make checks payable to "**St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church**"

I would like to be a donor of (check all that apply) for 2026

Food Gift Cards _____ in memory/honor of _____ \$20

Communion Wafers for (month) _____ in memory/honor of _____ \$10/month

Eternal Candle for (month) _____ in memory/honor of _____ \$30/ month

Palms for (Palm Sunday) _____ in memory/ honor of _____ \$25

Baptism & Confirmation gifts in memory/ in honor of _____ \$5-\$20 per gift

Bulletin for (month) _____ in memory/ honor of _____ \$10/ month

Building Fund in memory/ honor of _____ \$ _____

Other _____ in memory/ honor of _____ \$ _____

Your Name _____ Total Donation Enclosed: _____

Checks are payable to "St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church" and donations are fully tax deductible





St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church
1746 S. Clinton Ave.
Trenton, NJ 08610

DATED MATERIAL