

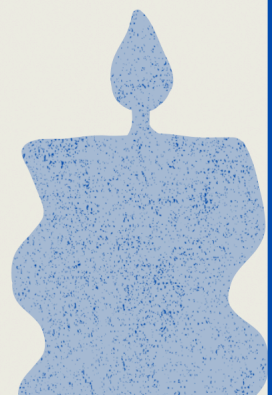
The Ambassador

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



ADVENT
Sundays @11AM

St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church
1748 S. Clinton Ave.
Trenton NJ 08610




ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

**CHRISTMAS
EVE
CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE**

December 24th, 2025
5:30 PM
1748 S. Clinton Ave.
Trenton NJ 08610

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From The Pastor's Desk

As this year draws to a close, I believe it is a good moment now to look back and reflect on everything that happened in our parish community in the past year. I am convinced that 2025 was a good year for us at St. Bart's. We must say "thank you" to God and to you dear parishioners for making it a successful and rewarding year. We had great plans and expectations, however not everything was possible to complete and achieve. At the end of the year, we are satisfied and grateful to God for the progress and growth.

I wanted to keep you informed with some numbers, new ministries, and explain our victories and challenges we encountered during the past year from my own perspective. New Members and Ministries- First of all, I wanted to express my gratitude to the parish Staff, members of the Council, many volunteers and those who minister in our community for their hard work, advice and willingness to serve at St. Bart's. We have a few new members that have stepped up in a big way this year. I hope you noticed some improvement in communication, media ministry, and coordination of various ministries the last few months. Because of them we were able to fine tune our food ministries and RAWtools endeavor. We are proud of these ministry.

Our first purpose as a religious community is to pray and worship. We had a meaningful and beautiful celebration of Easter, Blessing of the Animals, and Reformation Sunday.. I was encouraged by your involvement, help and large participation. I am glad we have more opportunities and occasions to pray and organize social gathering. We are committed to continuing these events and celebrations that strengthen us as one community of siblings in Christ. The social gatherings, hospitality, food and fellowship encourage people to come to church and join our religious community.

I also believe the Latine community feels more at home here and is growing in numbers. We will continue to make an effort to bring both our communities (Spanish and English) closer to each other in prayer and worship as well as social events with respect of course to our cultural difference.

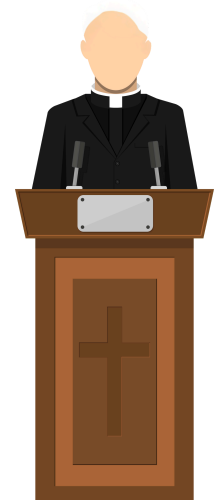
The Vision Mission and Our Strategic Plan - I am grateful to the Building committee (Walt and Brandon) for their discernment to maintain and keep in use the buildings. Difficulties and Challenges- Not everything was good and some of our initiatives and plans were not completed. ICE has been an issue terrorizing our community. Thus, inviting and welcoming families and youth will be always a challenge. It is necessary to keep growing not just in number but also in spirituality. Another challenging mission is to find and train new volunteers to continue our long traditions, ministries and activities.



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

These are challenges we have to face but there are many other reasons to be satisfied and grateful to God as we are entering the New Year 2026.

Thus, I am confident, this year will be another busy and successful year. I believe we will continue to grow in number but also in spirit. We will become an even more vibrant and growing community reaching out to those in need in the parish and larger community.

Lastly, thank you for your prayers and support. I appreciate your comments and encouraging words but also your suggestions for improvements. Please do not hesitate to give me your feedback and thoughts not just about this report but also about our parish life. Our effort as parish Staff and administration only makes sense with your willingness to collaborate and your care. I am blessed and proud to be your pastor.



Vision Statement

"Little Church With A
BIG HEART"

Have A Merry Christmas!!
Pastor Erich

“

If [out neighbor] is hungry and we do not feed him when it is in our power to do so, we practically permit him to die of hunger. We should take this view concerning any perilous condition, any adverse circumstance, with our neighbor. How love is the fulfilment of the Law, we have not heard

MARTIN LUTHER
(1483-1546)

"Fourth Sunday After Epiphany"



Message From Council President

As the year draws to a close, we asked our Council President, Chris Rivera, to reflect on the challenges and opportunities our church is facing....

What brought my family to St. Bart's was loss and hope. After losing our daughter Zienna in 2021, we were searching for a church home that was both accepting and aligned with our values—a place where we could find healing and belonging. When we welcomed our daughter Zelinne in 2022, we made a promise to show our gratitude to God by raising her to know and love Him.

We would often drive by St. Bart's and see people lined up for fresh produce and the food pantry. That image spoke to us. It showed us that this was not just a church asking for tithes, but a church that gives back—a church that serves its community with compassion and purpose.

One sunny Sunday in September 2023, my family decided to visit. From the moment we walked through the doors, we felt welcomed. We weren't just greeted; we were embraced. Over time, we became not only members but active volunteers—and now, I have the honor of serving as Council President.

To me, that is how St. Bart's shines its light in the South Ward: through genuine welcome, service, and love in action. We belong to each other because we lift one another up—through faith, through service, and through the simple act of being present for our neighbors and for each other.

One of the main challenges we face in feeding our neighbors is the growing need within our community and the fear many residents carry due to their legal status. Some are hesitant to come forward for help because they worry about being judged or being seen.

As a church that believes in acceptance and compassion, it's important that we continue building trust and showing that St. Bart's is a safe place for everyone.

Another challenge is ensuring we have enough resources to meet the needs of all who come to us. The demand keeps growing, and it's not something we can face alone. To truly sustain and expand our efforts, we need to strengthen our community partnerships. There are so many businesses, stores, and restaurants right here in our area that could become incredible allies in this mission.

By building those relationships—whether through food donations, sponsorships, or shared volunteer efforts—we can extend our reach and deepen our impact. What we need most is support in outreach: connecting with local partners, spreading awareness about what we do, and inviting others to join in the work. Together, we can continue to feed both body and spirit in these uncertain times.

I believe that St. Bart's greatest strength right now lies in our people—especially our wonderful volunteers. Their dedication, compassion, and willingness to serve are what make our outreach possible. In particular, having volunteers who speak Spanish has been an incredible asset. Being able to connect directly with our largely Spanish-speaking community builds trust and fosters genuine relationships. That bridge of language and understanding allows us to reach hearts as well as hands, and it has an immeasurable impact on what we're able to accomplish together.



Message From Council President

I would love to see all of the Council members become more actively involved in all of our ministries—through participation and presence. When our leadership is visible and engaged, it inspires others to follow their example. I'd also like to see more of our members involved in ministry work. Each person brings unique gifts, and the more we encourage everyone to take part, the stronger our community becomes.

Beyond that, I think it's important for both the Council and members to come forward with new and creative ideas for engagement—ways we can connect with our neighbors that go beyond our food ministries. Recreation and fellowship opportunities for both adults and children could help strengthen our sense of community. Events like our community BBQ or themed gatherings are great examples of how we can bring people together, build relationships, and continue shining our light in South Ward.

Looking ahead five years, I would love to see St. Bart's expand its mission beyond being a place of worship to becoming a true community hub. While it may be ambitious, I envision our food ministry growing into a full community center that operates with regular hours and offers a range of supportive services.

In addition to our Friday and Saturday food distributions, I'd love to see St. Bart's provide job search assistance, life skills training, youth programs, and emergency support for families in crisis. These kinds of services would allow us to meet people where they are—not only feeding their physical needs but also helping them build stability and hope for the future.

In five years, I hope St. Bart's continues to be known as a place that welcomes, uplifts, and empowers the South Ward community—a place where faith and action truly come together. Some of the toughest obstacles St. Bart's faces are deeply connected to the challenges within the South Ward community itself. Many of our neighbors are struggling with food insecurity, unemployment, housing instability, and limited access to resources. These challenges have only grown in recent years, and they directly impact the number of people turning to us for help.

Without a doubt, the highlight of the year has been our partnership with Mercer Street Friends. This collaboration has allowed our food ministry to grow and expand in incredible ways, enabling us to serve more families and meet the increasing needs of our community. It's been inspiring to see what we can accomplish when we work together toward a shared mission of compassion and service. Looking ahead, I'm excited for the day when we're able to purchase a box truck to help with donation pickups and further strengthen our outreach efforts.

I would like to emphasize that during these uncertain times, now more than ever, we are called to live out the teachings Jesus shared during His Sermon on the Mount. His words remind us of who we are meant to be—people of light, compassion, and faith. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14). That call feels especially relevant today. As members of St. Bart's, we are that light in the South Ward—through our kindness, our service, and our willingness to stand beside our neighbors in need.

Christopher 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 bags of food: Brandon, Jackie, Kristen, Emely, Jamie, Walt, Jim, Lisa, Don, Chris, & St Paul's, !
Thank You To All!



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



Congregational Birthdays

Apologies for any omission of dates.

DECEMBER

20 – Violet Teschke
24– Maria Ramirez
30 – Beth Peroni
30 – Virgie Plantier

JANUARY

19 – Carol Black

FEBRUARY

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



ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 12 – Kristen & Kleber Arcos
Jan. 2 – Dan & Tracie Bartholomew



Staff & Officers of St. Bart's

Rev. Erich Kussman, Pastor

Jo–Ann Sciarrotta
Music Administrator

Virgie Plantier
Sexton



Brandon Plantier
Musician

Cindy Percak
Office Administrator

Cindy Percak
Financial Secretary

Jackie Prekop
Enid's Pantry Coordinator

Emely Tecum
Media Manager

Kristen Arcos
Enid's Pantry Coordinator

Congregation Council

Chris Rivera
President

Jackie Prekop
Secretary

Brandon Plantier
Vice President

Cindy Percak
Financial Secretary

Debbie Formoso
Council

Virginia McNulty
Council

Church News



Advent And Christmas Schedule

Advent 1

Sunday November 30th
11:00AM

Wednesday Advent at Prince of Peace

December 3rd
6:00PM

Advent 2

Sunday December 7th
11:00AM

Wednesday Advent at St Bart's

December 10th
6:00PM

Advent 3

Sunday December 14th
11:00AM

Blue Christmas Service at Prince of Peace

Wednesday December 17th
6:00PM

Advent 4

Sunday December 21st
11:00AM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday December 24th
5:30PM

Lessons & Carols

December 28th
11:00AM



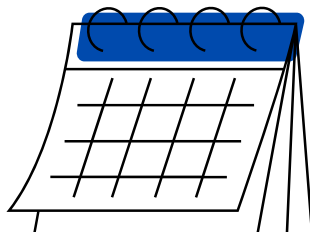
Church News Continuous

Mark Your Calendar !

Turkey Drive

November 22nd

10AM



Christmas Eve Candlelight

Wednesday, December 24th

5:30PM

Lessons & Carols

Sunday December 28th

11AM

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday January 25th

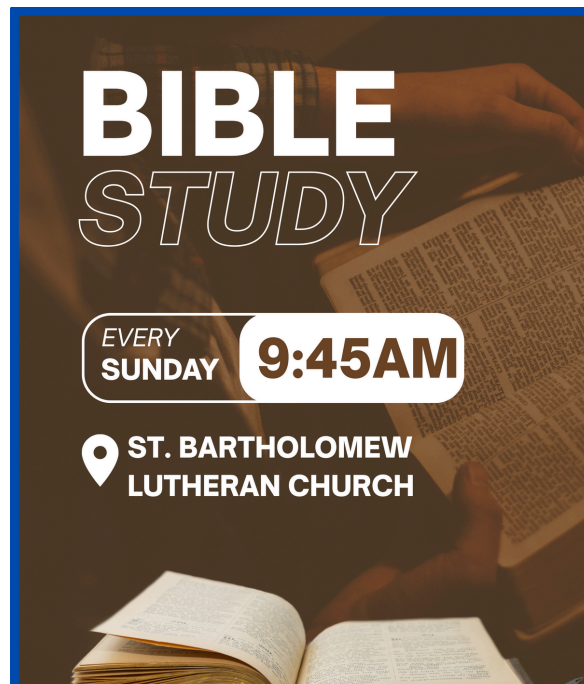
12PM

(Snow date February 1st)

Council Retreat

Saturday February 7th

10AM



Class Begins:

February 8th



Community Service

COMMUNITY SERVICE POSSIBILITIES

Enid's Food Pantry

Open every 2nd & 4th Saturdays @ 10AM

2nd & 4th Fridays at 3:30PM for Head Start Families.

Farmer's Market is closed for season

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

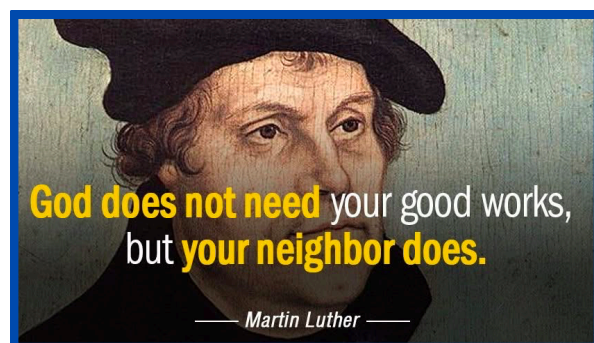
Martha's Breakfast!

Last Tuesday of the month

@ 9AM at Pat's Diner

Bell Choir

The bell choir got back together in September and have been busy practicing and ringing in church. They will be ringing the first Sunday in Advent and on Christmas Eve. We welcome Dawn and Miguel to the choir. We will take a break in January and start practices again in February. If you are interested in ringing with us in February, please talk to Barb.



Enid's Food Pantry

Message From Our Pantry Coordinator

Our Food Pantry is alive and well. This is one of the biggest ministries of St. Bart's. Since last reporting Enid's Pantry has partnered with Mercer Street Friends which has multiplied the amount of food we offer those facing food insecurity.

When you go into the fellowship hall you may notice many changes. We've acquired more cabinets and freezers and have tried to rearrange the area to meet the increasing need of pantry space, while still creating a spacious fellowship area.

As you know we still hold pantry the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month and the Farmers Market every Friday morning during the growing season. Three times since the summer we have also given out fresh fish. The need is apparent.

Each Saturday pantry we are serving 130 to 150 households. This adds up to feeding over 1,050 people a month. Our Friday Farmer's Market hands out produce to roughly the same amount of people per week. That adds up to more than 3,000 people a month.

Of course none of this would be possible without the help of all our volunteers, to all that contribute monetarily and to our friends from other Lutheran churches. Much time and physical labor goes into making the pantry run smoothly and efficiently. So my personal thanks goes to all.

As always if you have any questions feel free to see me, or Kristen Arcos. We will be happy to help. God Bless us with being able to continue this ministry and build trust and respect in the community.



Upcoming Events



ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN

Thanksgiving

Turkey Drive

Let's Share & Care

November 22nd
At 10 AM

Location:
1746 S Clinton Ave,
Trenton, NJ 08610

Or visit our site:
stbartlutheran.net



SAVE THE DATE
NOVEMBER 21-23
2025

PEACEMAKER SUMMIT

SPONSORED BY
RAWtools Philly, The Simple Way, and Others

SESSIONS ON PEACEMAKING
SHARING BEST PRACTICES
THEOLOGICAL & PRACTICAL PEACEMAKING
*HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS IN:
WELDING | WOODTURNING | BLACKSMITHING

HOSTED BY
ESPERANZA CORE

3222 H STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19134

*LIMITED NUMBER OF SPACES



JUSTICE & LOVE CONCERT

BRING NON PERISHABLE DONATIONS FOR ENTRY

NOV. 20 . 2025
7PM

FEATURING
JOHN FRANCIS O'MARA

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH
1746 S CLINTON AVE
TRENTON, NJ 08610
UNITED STATES

RESISTENCIA
EN ACCIÓN NJ

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH



BISHOP FUNDRAISING

JOIN US

We are raising funds to help a bishop in Africa and their community build a more sustainable future. Your generosity will help purchase a cow — providing milk, food, and income for families in need.

Together, we can make a lasting difference and share God's love in action. Every donation, big or small, helps bring hope and stability to their community.

Donate to Our
Paypal -->

Our goal is to reach
\$5,000

Thank you for your support

ST. BARTHOLOMEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEW JERSEY
Evangelical Lutheran Church

Order Form

POINSETTIAS

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

Cost is \$12.00

Plants may be picked up after the Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service

Your Name _____ Donation Enclosed _____

Return by Sunday **December 7th**. Please make checks payable to "St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church"

FOOD GIFT CARDS Cost is \$15.00

I would like to order _____ (how many) gift card(s) in **memory** of _____

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

I would like to order _____ (how many) gift card (s) in **honor** of _____

Return by Sunday the 14th of December

Please make checks payable to "St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church"

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

Communion Wafers for (month) _____ in memory/honor of _____ \$15/month

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

Altar Flowers for (week) _____ in memory/ honor of _____ \$30/ week

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

Newsletter in memory/ honor of _____ \$75 per quarter

Bulletin for (month) _____ in memory/ honor of _____ \$15/ month

Building Fund in memory/ honor of _____ \$ _____

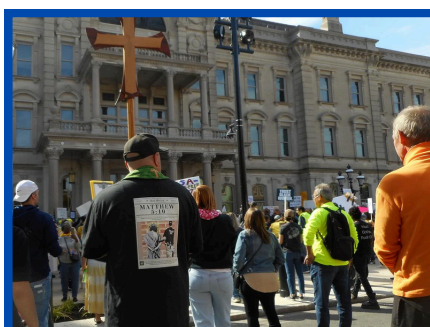
Other _____ in memory/ honor of _____ \$ _____

Name _____ Phone _____

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



Highlights





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

DATED MATERIAL
