

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS FOR 2018 LEARNING MINISTRIES DAY

### A. WONDER LABORATORY – 2 tract session (must sign up for both sessions)

This “Wonder Laboratory” will take the place of taking two separate traditional workshops. You must commit to participating in both sessions. Together we will explore more deeply the themes of the keynote address using scripture, art, song, prayer, current events, silence and story. This group experience will provide opportunity to plan possible ways you can help bring wonder to the center of your personal and communal faith life. It will be a space to ask big questions and dive deeper into how communities might enable a wonder-based way of listening and growing.

**Leader: Pastor Lori Kochanski** currently lives in Albany NY. Since ordained in 2001, she has served in a variety of congregational settings as both a transition pastor and called pastor. In addition, she has served as a hospice chaplain and as a member of the executive staff of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. She is also a certified spiritual director. In all areas of her life, Pastor Kochanski strives to live into God’s command to love neighbor as self. She values mindfulness practices as a way to keep an open heart for the work of ministry. She graduated from Susquehanna University and earned her Masters of Divinity at Yale Divinity School.

### B. LUTHER, COPERNICUS, AND THE WONDER OF SCIENCE – morning or afternoon sessions

2018 marks the 475th anniversary of the publishing of Copernicus' *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*. 2017 was the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. What relevance do these anniversaries have for each other? The two anniversaries are related because of a critical comment that Martin Luther made about Copernicus in his "Table Talk," which has been interpreted to mean that Luther was an opponent of science. Is this a fair judgment?

This workshop will examine Luther's theology and explore which of several models for the relation of faith and science best fits his point of view. Did Luther see faith in conflict with science or does his theology support a more positive view of the relationship of faith and science? Perhaps most important is how Luther's emphasis on "the priesthood of all believers" and our baptismal call to use our gifts to serve others applies to the scientists in our congregations.

**Leader: Pastor Roger Timm** is a retired ELCA pastor who served in several locations as a campus pastor and parish pastor. While he was an assistant professor for religion at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania, in the 1980's, he developed a course, “Religious Perspectives on Science.” When he was a parish pastor in the Chicago suburbs from 1993 to 2011, he participated in a number of faith and science dialogue programs, including programs of the Zygon Center at LSTC. In retirement, Timm has taught several courses for the Institute for Learning in Retirement, located at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, dealing with faith and science as well as ethics and technology.

### C. CARING FOR CREATION IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT – morning or afternoon sessions

In this workshop we will deal with advocacy and political involvement to support caring for creation. We will emphasize what individuals or small groups within congregations can do and then provide some general ideas for engaging people who question the need for creation care in a positive, productive, and faith-grounded way.

**Leader: Pastor Paul Metzloff** is the pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Kingston, PA; he has been on the Creation Care Task Force for three years, and is a GreenFaith Fellow. He has served on the board of Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light, and is passionate about linking faith to caring for God's creation.

## **D. FAITH FORMATION, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND SUNDAY SCHOOL: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? – afternoon session only**

Learnings from Dr. Rich Melheim author of “Kill Sunday School (before it kills the church)”, “Holding Your Family Together, 5 Simple Steps to Help Bring Your Family Closer to God and Each Other”, and his “Reboot Sunday School & Birth Cross+Gen Ministry!” workshop in Philadelphia. Sunday School and Christian Education success stories will be shared and discussed. Discussion of “Where we go from here”....

**Leaders:** *Debbie Kolb* is a member of Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church. She worked in public school for 28 years, taught Kindergarten for 23 years, and worked at a church Nursery School for eight years. Retiring in 2013, Debbie loves the time she spends with family and friends and the time to babysit and volunteer. She currently serves on the Christian Education Team, Evangelism Committee, and Confirmation Teaching Team at Christ Hamilton.

**Sue Butz** has been a member of Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church since 1985. She is a lifelong Lutheran and church choir member. She taught Sunday School and Bible school for several years and for six years was a Confirmation small group leader. She currently serves on church council, is a member of the Evangelism committee, Ladies in Fellowship Together group, and community meal committee. She also serves as a Leader in the Stephen Ministry Program.

**Ed Jones** has been a member of Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church for 25 years, currently serving as Confirmation and Sunday School teacher and as Interim Director of Christian Education. Ed is blessed to be born into a strong multi-generational Christian Family with parents, grandparents and great-grandparents who understood and modeled Faith Formation and Christian Charity from baptism on. He served in many positions during his memberships at various churches in Minnesota, Montana, Iowa & Maine.

## **E. SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRIES – morning session only**

This workshop will explore the ways to include all people in the church. This is a great way to find resources, supports, and ideas to welcome every one of all abilities into a safe worshiping space. You will hear stories from people who have a disability and some of their parents. This workshop is a great way to learn more about disability and how to be more accepting of everyone. This workshop is for all!

**Leader:** *Samantha (Sammi) Johns* is a sophomore at Moravian College. She is majoring in Special Education with an Early Education Certification on a Sociology Path. She is a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Johnsonville. Sammi is on many committees including Special Needs Ministries, Christian Ed, and Worship Music. She is a member of the Synod’s Youth, Young Adult, & Family Team.

## **F. BIG QUESTIONS “FOR” THE CHURCH – afternoon session only**

A discussion of four big questions that will shape the kind of wonder-land the ELCA can become. The questions are – What does it mean to be church? What difference does it make to be the Lutheran Church? How do we insure that we are church together? Are we prepared to be church together for the sake of the world?

**Leader:** *Bishop Samuel Zeiser* served four congregations in this synod before assuming office as our synod’s bishop in 2008. Part of what he enjoys in his visits to congregations are conversations with church members about how they see their congregation as a dynamic setting for mission and ministry.

## **G. CHILDREN, NATURE AND THE CHURCH – morning or afternoon sessions**

Dirt, bugs, snakes and rain - once words that children loved. Today it is a different story, as children spend less and less time outdoors and more and more time in front of electronic toys indoors. We believe that God created this world and we have a responsibility to love it and take care of it. However, people who are afraid of God's creation are not going to want to protect it. Those of us in the church who work with our children need to help foster a love of God's world. Come and learn about the importance of the outdoor world in creating a caring, healthy adult and how to incorporate nature projects into your Sunday School curriculum. We will be making some nature-inspired crafts and trying out a few nature-based activities. So, bring your love of God's creation and your curiosity and spend some time looking at ways to share that with our younger generation.

**Leader:** *Cheryl Statham* is a lifelong explorer of the world around us. A long-time birder, and lover of wildflowers, trees, butterflies and animals, she loves to share what she knows with others, especially children. In her secular job of Director of Education and Programming at Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm, she incorporates nature studies into many of the farm's programming and loves to explore the woods around the farm. She is a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, where she teaches Sunday School and is on the Christian Education Committee. She is also a member of the Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team.

## **H. REINFORCING BIBLE STORIES WITH CRAFTS – morning or afternoon sessions**

This session will offer an opportunity to share ideas as well as “make and take” a craft.

**Leader:** *Deacon Joy Gerhart* currently serves St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Douglassville as Director of Youth and Family Ministry. Joy has led many VBS workshops and craft workshops for Learning Ministries Day and is a member of the Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team.

## **I. WONDER, LOVE AND PRAISE: Singing in the Church – morning or afternoon sessions**

In 2017 the Church celebrated 500 years of Reformation. Part of that Reformation involved music. Beginning with Martin Luther's theology of music, this workshop will take a look at music and singing, and how they bring us a sense of wonder, of delight, of joy. And yes, we will do some singing!

**Leader:** *Michael E. Krentz* is Dean of the Chapel (Philadelphia Campus) at United Lutheran Seminary, and is also Director of Music and Organist at Christ Lutheran Church in Allentown. He is a former dean of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and is Secretary-Treasurer of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. He is also a member of the Worship Team of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.