

# SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

## Meet Your Synod's Staff



**Debbie Frey**

Debbie is responsible for several key administrative tasks. She is the registrar for most synod events, and serves on the planning committee for the Bishop's Conference and the Synod Assembly.

She also collates the information submitted by a congregation experiencing a pastoral vacancy and then prepares the parish study book.

In addition, she works with Karen Matthias-Long to keep track of materials in the synod Resource Center.

Debbie has worked for the synod since June 2004. Prior to that she served as parish secretary at St. Paul, Catasauqua. Some years ago, before starting a family, she worked at Air Products.

Debbie's husband, John, recently retired. They have two children and one granddaughter, with a second granddaughter on the way.

Debbie enjoys traveling, and works at crafts, including jewelry and sewing. She is member at St. Paul, Catasauqua.

## San Martin de Porres, Allentown



Four years ago on Easter 2013 the Spanish-speaking Lutheran congregation, San Martin de Porres, relocated from St. Paul's on 8th Street, Allentown, to St. John's on 5th Street, Allentown. San Martin's move was evangelistic in nature, seeking more visibility and collaborative ministry opportunities. Admittedly, long time members are not as young as they once were and walking up two flights of steps before worship helped the congregation make the decision to move.

On December 11, 1988, San Martin was organized as a Lutheran congregation. Then Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom of the ELCA wrote a letter to the members of San Martin in which he stated - "Your congregation's service of organization last December was historic: you are the first new congregation organized in your synod since the ELCA was formed. And, as a Hispanic congregation, you are a living expression of our deep hope that the ELCA will become a truly inclusive church."

In December San Martin celebrated its 28th Anniversary as a Lutheran Congregation. The existence of San Martin has been a collaborative effort within The Lutheran Church in America, the ELCA, the NEPA Synod, and churches of the Lehigh Mission District. A number of key individuals have played a significant role as well.

San Martin de Porres gratefully gives thanks to God and acknowledges the prayers and generous financial gifts, along with gifts of time and talents, from so many in our synod. This collaborative effort brings God's message to the Spanish-speaking community as together we proclaim God's inclusive Gospel of new life.

## ELCA Mission Builders



### "Building Structures, Community, and Faith"

Mission Builders are people from all walks of life—carpenters and others who have an interest in building for the church, meeting fellow-Christians across the country, having fun, and helping others.

Working side-by-side with folks from a local congregation, mission builders help the congregation construct or improve a church building at significant cost savings.

On our territory, a number of years ago, Mission Builders helped the members of Holy Trinity, Dingmans Ferry construct their facility.

If you would like to learn more about this ministry of our church or are interesting in becoming a mission builder, check out their web site: <http://www.elcamissionbuilders.org>.

### Update Congregational Officers for 2017

Please send the Congregational Officers Form to the synod office as soon as the information is available. It can be downloaded as either a Word document or a PDF file from the synod website under "Publications" and then "Documents, Forms, & Policies."

## Tri-Congregational Worship



Three Northern Berks congregations joined together on Sunday, October 16, to share in Sunday School and in worship. The three congregations have gathered together before, and they are really getting the hang of it now!

More than 240 people attended the worship service held at Zion, Perry Township. Pastor Inge Williams, of Frieden's, Shartlesville, was the preacher; and Pastor Burl Latshaw, Interim Pastor at St. John, Hamburg was the Assisting Minister. Pastor Latshaw also taught an Adult Sunday School class about Martin Luther and the Reformation. More than 90 attended Sunday School classes including 23 catechetical age youth in grades 7 and 8. St. John's Youth Director, Lydia Beck, was thrilled to have that many young people together.

Zion's Brass and Zion's Bells played. More than 35 Adult Choir members sang a joint anthem led by Donald Ryan, Zion's Organist and Choir Director. During the Children's Message, the congregation sang all the verses of "We Are the Church Together."

More than 140 stayed for a robust lunch in the Zion's Fellowship Hall. Zion's provided the main dish (baked ziti) and the other congregations brought salads and desserts. It was an amazing spread that everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Because of family roots and close community ties through the work of the Hamburg Cluster and the Northern Berks Ministerium, members are well acquainted with each other and with working together.

On March 31- April 2, 2017 the three congregations will share in their second annual Catechism Retreat at Bear Creek Camp with a theme "The 3 Great Days." Synod Congregations with up to 5 catechetical students are invited to join in that weekend, until the house is full!

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