

# SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

## Spiritual Care for Elder Care-Givers

- Do you provide part time or full time care for an elder?
- Would you like a safe place to share your joys and struggles with other care-givers?
- Would you appreciate companioning in nurturing your spirit?

Elder-care-giving can certainly be challenging, presenting both joys and frustrations to elders and their care-givers. An every-other-month gathering will provide participants with a time of guided program, prayer, supportive conversation around joys and struggles, and sharing new ideas for offering care.

Each gathering will be led by the Rev. Dr. Tom Lichner, specially trained in Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction. Please direct your interest to Pastor Lichner either at [tllichner@rcn.com](mailto:tllichner@rcn.com) or 610-533-9362.

Meetings will be held at the Center for Spiritual Awakening at Christ Lutheran Church, 1245 W. Hamilton St., Allentown from 1:30 - 3:00 PM on the following Wednesdays: Sept. 20, Nov. 15, Jan. 17, March 14, May 16, and July 18.

"Spiritual Care for Elder Care-Givers" is being co-sponsored by the synod's Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry Team.

## Luke Csellak Swanson - YAGM



Luke Swanson with friends Alicia, Lucas, and Martin from Santo Sacramento

I am Luke Swanson, a recently returned Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM). As a missionary/volunteer for the ELCA, I was called to walk alongside our brothers and sisters in Buenos Aires, Argentina. There I volunteered with the Santo Sacramento Congregation where I aided in their Sunday program supporting marginalized neighbors and providing them with a safe place to be themselves. Additionally, I volunteered with a creative organization, El Arca, where I lived out daily life in community, joy, and forgiveness with intellectually disabled adults.

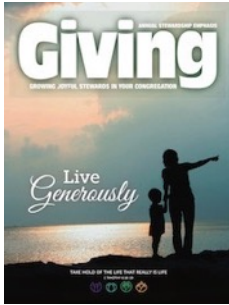
My YAGM year was filled with ups and downs. I started my year with some inevitable expectations, many of which provided me with layers of comfort, others with intense feelings of hardship. For the first time in my life I frequently felt like an outsider. My Protestantism, white skin tone, and language all put me at a disadvantage.

But what my friends at El Arca taught me so well is that I can do things others cannot, and they most certainly can do things that I never will be able to do. Life is to be lived in community, in joy, and in forgiveness; and it is these ideas that I have brought home with me.

Thank you to all who have supported me during this journey.

## Don't Reinvent the Wheel!

- ◆ Are you a member of a ministry team in your congregation?
- ◆ Did you know that the ELCA website has a ton of resources to help you?



If you visit <http://elca.org/resources> you will find links to over 50 areas of ministry (listed alphabetically).

This month we highlight some of the resources for stewardship.

They fall under 6 categories.

**Leadership:** These resources can help your team put together a stewardship program that is eye-catching and informative.

**Care for Creation:** This is a page for congregations who want to raise environmental awareness among their people.

**Lifestyle:** There are numerous bible studies and other spiritual resources available at this location.

**Finances:** Here you will find samples of giving charts, proportional giving, an explanation of tithing, and other helpful materials.

**Spiritual Gifts:** This page is helpful for the non-monetary aspect of stewardship.

**StewardNet:** This is a newsletter for church leaders. There are links both to the most recent edition as well as many previous editions.

## Healing the Wounds of Racism



Christian writer and activist Jim Wallis calls racism "America's original sin." Racism was present at the birth of our nation and, as current headlines make clear, has never been eradicated.

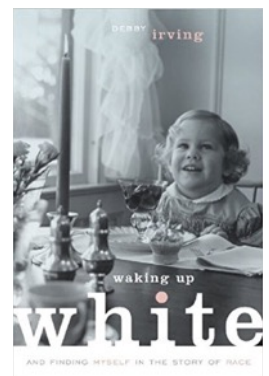
Seeing a need to address racism in the Northeastern PA Synod, the synod staff recently studied Debby Irving's book *Waking Up White*. This book is Irving's personal story about awakening to her own racism, how it has been built into our societal structures, and how she has benefited from it. Her book is a helpful resource for white people to understand the insidiousness of racism and their complicity in it.

Conversation continues among the staff about this issue. In particular, these are some questions that continue to rise: What kinds of actions could we, a predominantly white synod, take to address this evil? Where can we have honest and open conversations about racism?

If you are looking for ways to act against racism, this book may be a good place for you to start. Including this concern in the prayer life of your congregation is also another way to begin to take action.

Each upcoming issue of Synod News will include a resource or an idea to help you wrestle with ways in which you can participate in healing the wounds of racism.

Please share any ways you might be actively addressing the sin of racism. Perhaps we can learn and act together as a synod to continue doing God's work.



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2354 Grove Road, Allentown PA 18109; 610-266-5101.  
[nepsinfo1988@gmail.com](mailto:nepsinfo1988@gmail.com); [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org)