

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA



Our synod has given \$1,065,309 in support of this Campaign. We celebrate that nearly 81% have given to at least one of the priorities of the campaign. With a bit more effort we can reach the goal of 100% congregation participation established by Synod Assembly.

You can contact Guy Ehler, Synod Campaign Coordinator, at guy.ehler@rcn.com for information about your congregation's record.

As we complete the 4th year and enter the final year of the Campaign in 2018, 52 of our 268 congregations have yet to contribute. Suggested milestones for meeting the goal of 100% are:

- 13 more congregation contribute by the end of this fiscal year (January 31, 2018),
- 13 more before April 30,
- 13 by September 30,
- and the final 13 before the end of the Campaign in January 2019.

The Campaign Priority for 2018 is "Leadership" which includes the ELCA Fund for Leaders, and Youth and Young Adults. The youth and young adults are the future of our churches. Wouldn't this be a great priority for your congregation to support next year?

Good Shepherd, Easton Summer Youth Program



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wilson Borough (Easton, PA) hosted a Summer Youth Program, a free summer-long program for elementary age children. The program was conceived by Pastor Michael Reist of Good Shepherd. Pastor Becca Middeke-Conlin of St. Paul's, Southside Easton served as the Program's Director.

Pr. Becca oversaw a staff of four in addition to several volunteers. Over 40 children participated throughout the summer with an average of 20 children a day. With donations through Thrivent Action Team Grants, a Synod Grant, and donations from Good Shepherd and other local congregations the program was able to provide breakfast, snack and lunch to the children each day.

During the program, the children participated in a variety of activities, thanks to congregation members and local organizations. Through 4H they made messy science experiments including homemade bouncy balls and slime. They learned where food comes from and how to cook thanks to the Easton Hunger Coalition.

They made a variety of crafts, learned about different cultures, read to therapy dogs, met a variety of animals, and engaged in many more activities. The children also learned about saving money as they watched their money add up this summer through a collection for God's Global Barnyard.

Talking About Racism

ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT

A November 2015 news release from the ELCA stated, "As racism remains an enduring crisis in the United States, the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, is continuing her call... to address [racism's] complexity and implications..."

Here is a helpful resource for congregations, small groups, and youth groups to examine more closely these complexities and implications. What resources are you using? Please share them on the synod Facebook page.

As a starting place for conversations about racism, check out the ELCA social statement "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" at <http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture>.

This statement expresses the ELCA's calling to celebrate culture and ethnicity. And it commits the ELCA to confront racism; to engage in public leadership, witness and deliberation on these matters; and to advocate for justice and fairness for all people.

The statement is grounded in the conviction that the church has been gathered together in the joyful freedom of the reign of God as announced by and embodied in Jesus. That reign has not yet come in its fullness, but the message of God's "Yes" to the world breaks down all dividing walls as we live into that promise. A study guide accompanies the social statement.

Nigerian Refugees Find a Home in West Berks



On June 9, God placed a Nigerian family in the hands of the West Berks Mission District. That Friday afternoon, the Johnson family (Tola, Abigail and their 3 children ages 4, 6 and 8) was released from the family detention center in Bern Township and dropped off at the bus terminal in Reading with tickets to NYC. Luckily their attorneys were notified; and after a bit of research, it was determined there was not an appropriate living plan for them in NYC.

A network of volunteers from the Greater Reading Immigration Project and the West Berks Mission District was contacted. The family was placed in a hotel for the weekend, and a host family came forward to offer housing to them until August. Since then there has been an amazing outpouring of support from individuals and faith communities!

Thanks to the kindness of strangers, the Johnsons moved into an apartment at the end of July. Six-months rent and security deposit needed to be paid up front. To date more than \$15,000 has been donated with more promised! All the furnishings and household items have been collected from generous folks sharing from their abundance.

This has been an incredible opportunity to experience what a caring community can do! The Johnsons will most likely need continued support for at least a year, as the asylum process can take quite a long time. The family is so grateful and is humbled by the love and support they have found here in this community! Tola describes this as "the physical presence of God in their lives, working through the people who have been put in their path during this journey."

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