

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Disaster Relief Trailer



There is a disaster relief trailer full of tools and supplies that anyone can borrow. It is located at Ziegel's, Breinigsville.

The contact person for scheduling its use is Lori Brawn; and she can be reached at lori1962@verizon.net or at 610-285-6157.

Thank you to the folks at Friedens, Oley for taking care of it in the past, and to Ziegel's for taking it on now.

Download information on the trailer and its contents at <http://nepasynod.org/documents/2017-10-distaster-trail-info.pdf>.



Friday Evening "Sunday" School



Like many congregations, St. Luke Union Church in Shoemakersville had experienced a decline in Sunday school attendance. There are many factors involved, sports being the most dominant. As pastor Walt Breiner told one parishioner: "Sadly, the church doesn't own Sunday morning anymore." With that in mind and with a prayerful approach, St. Luke began J.A.M. (Jesus And Me), an alternative "Sunday" school on Friday evenings, offered in addition to the usual Sunday morning classes.

J.A.M. is offered every Friday evening from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM using VBS site rotation as the model. The evening opens with singing a song, hearing a story from the Bible, a children's message, and a closing prayer. Then comes a "Dance Party" where the children learn songs with dances or games. Next is crafts, followed by a snack. From there the children see an animated Bible movie and always have ice cream during that time.

To date there are 26 children enrolled in the program, six of whom are special needs children. Parents are invited to stay. Those who do remain seem to enjoy the evening and most participate fully in all activities as well as meals. However, some parents use the time for grocery shopping or for an "adult" dinner. A mother of two special needs children returned after two hours with tears in her eyes telling how much she and her husband cherish this time of respite.

Most important, the children and their families hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and know that Jesus loves them.

Talking About Racism

TWO BOOK STUDIES

Waking Up White (Debby Irving)

The synod staff recently studied Debby Irving's book, *Waking Up White*. This book is Irving's personal story of awakening to her own racism, how racism has been built into our societal structures, and how she has benefited from her insights.

Her book is a helpful resource for white people to understand the insidiousness of racism and their complicity in it. Discussion questions follow each chapter. This resource is appropriate for senior high youth as well as adults.

America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, And The Bridge To A New America (Jim Wallis)

The book jacket states: "In *America's Original Sin*, Wallis offers a prophetic and deeply personal call to action in overcoming the racism so ingrained in American society.

"He speaks candidly to Christians--particularly white Christians--urging them to cross a new bridge toward racial justice and healing. Whenever divided cultures and gridlocked power structures fail to end systemic sin, faith communities can help lead the way to grassroots change.

"Probing yet positive, biblically rooted yet highly practical, this book shows people of faith how they can work together to overcome the embedded racism in America, galvanizing a movement to cross the bridge to a multiracial church and a new America."

Martin Luther's Bier, Brats, and Bible Klub



What can a congregation do to get its men more involved in the life of the church? And how, at the same time, can it inspire joint cooperation with a neighboring congregation? These questions were asked last year within our synod. One answer came in the form of a new Men's Ministry Group - one that would involve fellowship, service and devotion.

Schwarzwald, Jacksonwald and Reformation, Reifton (both in Exeter Township Berks County) formed the "Martin Luther's Bier, Brats and Bible Klub." This summer, the men of St. Mark's, Birdsboro also joined the group. Known as the BB&B, the group meets monthly at area restaurants or homes of members for fellowship, a meal, devotion, and project planning. Each meeting opens with prayer followed by a spirituality moment. Then, of course, there is the food, with bratwursts a usual staple of the meal!

But, the group isn't just about fellowship and devotion. It also focuses on service to the church and the community. Recent projects include support for local law enforcement, meals for senior citizens, food drives for seminarians and for the homeless, moving a local Vet into a new home, meals for the homeless, labor for the Humane Society, yard work at the The Lutheran Center, financial support for the Wittenberg English Ministries, and assisting with various church-related projects. The BB&B funds its projects through church fundraisers and through the use of Thrivent Action Teams.

Membership in the BB&B is free and open to all men. It is an ecumenical group claiming not only Lutheran members but also men from Roman Catholic and Episcopal parishes. Other congregations are encouraged to form their own BB&B's or to participate with the existing group.

For more information, please contact Pastor Jim Farnsworth, St. Mark's, Birdsboro at PastorJimSMLC@gmail.com or at 610-582-8167. You can also check out activities on [Facebook](#) at Martin Luther's Bier, Brats and Bible Klub - Berks County.

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