

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Learning Ministries Day

January 27

“Church as Wonder-Land: Transforming Faith Communities from ‘Places to Go for Answers’ to ‘Places to be with the Big Questions.’”

8:30 AM - 3:00 PM at Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church, Hamilton Square, Stroudsburg.

The keynote speaker is Pastor Lori Kochanski, former NEPS Pastor and Assistant to the Bishop. The title of her presentation is, “All Are Welcome: Celebrating Intergenerational Differences in the Church.”

Something for Everyone! A variety of workshops will be offered in the morning and afternoon. There is something that will draw the interest of most people in our synod’s congregations.



(Not Just CE People)

LM Day is a wonderful way to meet other Lutherans in our synod - youth and adults alike - and to do some networking and glean ideas from one another.

For more information and to register, visit the synod website at <http://nepasynod.org/event/learning-ministries-day-2018>.

VP Travels



Greetings, members of our Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA from your Synod Council VP Barbara Huffman de Belón!

Way back in June at the close of the annual Synod Assembly, as the incoming Synod Council Vice President, I asked those gathered if anyone was willing to invite me to their congregation. My objective was to get to know our members and also to hear about and see what they were doing

in mission, in their communities. To my great pleasure, nine churches quickly extended invitations.

Since August, I’ve visited five congregations—some for evening meetings with committee chairs and council members, some on Sundays for Temple Talks and time with the Adult Forum. In each visit, there was a common element: a firm understanding of what Christ directed his disciples, and us by extension, to do. That’s “Do”, with a capital “D”!

Some congregations are taking a deeper look at their facility and property and discussing what assets they have that they might not have considered using in mission. Some are reaching out to other Lutheran and communion-partner churches to start exploring what they can do jointly. Some are asking the question of what they’d really love to be doing, if they could find the means. All are asking, considering, and examining; and that is really healthy! My thanks to the following churches for the warm welcome extended to me and husband, Edwin, and for the candid conversations:

- St. John’s Lutheran, Emmaus
- St. John’s Lutheran, Kutztown
- Hope Lutheran, Reading
- Zion - Spies Lutheran, Reading
- St. Paul’s Lutheran, Fleetwood

For those readers who had no idea that you have a ‘traveling VP’ and would like to arrange a visit, either call (610.377.6103) or email (bjbelon@gmail.com) to explore possible dates.

Upcoming visits: Allegheny Ev. Lutheran, Mohnton; Reformed Lutheran, Reading/Exeter; St. John’s Lutheran, Tamaqua; St. Mark’s Lutheran, Minisink Hills. Looking forward to seeing you!

Talking About Racism

DOCUMENT

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (Peggy McIntosh)
[<http://code.ucsd.edu/pcosman/Backpack.pdf>]

This helpful document written by Peggy McIntosh in 1989 is still relevant today. It provides a way of thinking about the meaning of "white privilege" and is a good conversation starter for groups.

MOVIE - 13th

A description from Wikipedia: "13th is a 2016 American documentary by director Ava DuVernay. The film explores the 'intersection of race, justice and mass incarceration in the United States.' It is titled after the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which freed the slaves and prohibited slavery (unless as punishment for a crime)."

This is a thought-provoking and disturbing film suitable for senior high youth and adults. A helpful study guide is available online at <http://influencefilmclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/13th-Discussion-Guide.pdf>.

ELCA Resources

The ELCA website (<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Racial-Justice>) has a variety of resources for addressing racism. Check out *Troubling the Waters for Healing of the Church* and the other resources listed on this website.

Trinity, Bangor Utilizes Contemporary Artwork for Summer Worship



Photo by Larry Cory. Used with permission.

Trinity, Bangor worships in their air-conditioned fellowship hall during the warmer months. Although the chairs were set in semi-circular rows, similar to the pews in the main sanctuary upstairs, the background behind the altar was not very inspiring. The congregation's gaze fell upon rather ordinary windows and a painted wall.

So Pastor Larry Laine had an idea. Using his background in painting, and consulting with his daughter, Britta, who has a degree in painting from Boston University, he attempted to design a background that would enhance the spirituality of the worship space. In traditional church architecture this is called the reredos-- an ornamental screen with carvings, images, even statues which worshipers may contemplate during a service.

After numerous drafts, Pastor Laine settled on a floor-to-ceiling high and 12-foot wide piece of art that depicts the crucifix in a contemporary abstract painting. The negative space represents the cross, and the arm and head (made of wood) is the resurrected Christ. Red onyx was chosen for the body to show the warmth of the resurrection and to provide contrast for the colder background colors.

Pastor Laine also used his experience with woodworking to assemble the project. With the help of Trinity congregation member, Tom Marino, the piece of art was anchored to the wall where it will likely remain for the foreseeable future.

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