

# SYNOD NEWS

## Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

### St. Mark, Appenzell - Imagining Our Future



Last year St. Mark's Appenzell decided to work on its mission and ministry goals and to do it during sermon time over four sessions dispersed throughout the summer months. We constructed a timeline of what we remembered about church history by "talking amongst ourselves." We then wrote a memory or two on "sticky notes," which were placed by everyone on the timeline. Even children were excited to stick something on the wall.

It was noted that most of our memories occurred in the past 20-40 years, implying that the more distant past was not as important as where we are going now. So, the next week we talked about the challenges and the opportunities we experienced in just the past 20 years. Then, in the third session, we moved into asking "What is our church known for in the community?" followed by "What are some things we would like it to be known for?"

As a result of our reflections, three categories of ministry seemed to develop:

- learning/spiritual growth
- caring for membership/visitors
- fellowship/social ministry

During the final sessions, we listed on our sticky notes (see the picture above) some activities under each category that we would like to see started or improved. From those we chose two or three activities that we thought we might begin in the fall months.

The posters now hang in the church office to remind us about the other activities that we might try in the future. This process created a new energy that still continues in the congregation, as we look for ways God is calling us to be active in the community and the world.

### Thank You!

Thanks to the congregations who donated mac & cheese at Assembly 2019. The food was divided equally between Valley Food Bank in Conyngham and Shepherd House, which serves Carbon County.

## Holy Trinity, Dingmans Ferry Summer Youth Program: "Make Love Your Aim"



As soon as the public school year ends, youth ministry at Holy Trinity cranks up. The summer is full of faith formation and fun activities including group building, camping, lock-ins, and Vacation Bible Camp. The summer starts with a High Adventure Trip to the Adirondack Mountains. Seventeen high school youth and eight advisors spend a week camping, developing leadership skills, white water kayaking, and water skiing.



The second week includes three days of a Counselor In Training event for 30 middle school and high school youth. These young people are trained to work as teachers, helpers, and recreation staff for the Vacation Bible Camp. Some of the training is done by High Adventure Youth, as well as the pastor and staff.

The third week is filled with Vacation Bible Camp; and it includes an evening mid-week event with a giant BBQ, sing-a-long, and campfire for youth and families. The remainder of the summer has weekly youth activities for Grades 3-12. This year the theme was "Make Love Your Aim."



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