

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

We Love... 2019 A Day of Learning



We Love...because God first loves us. We Love...others because each person is a child of God. We Love...by expanding our understanding of others and allowing people to be truly who God made them to be. We Love...because God is love.

These were just a few of the takeaways from We Love... 2019, a day of learning to help congregations be more opening and welcoming to LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. For many participants this was uncharted territory, as they are learning what all those letters actually do mean (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic plus many more).

For others, there was still plenty to learn as we explored the intersection between sexuality/gender identity and faith and discussed how the church can be a place where people do not feel they have to hide their sexuality or gender identity in order to feel the love of God and others.



The keynote speaker was Jamie Bruesehoff, a writer and advocate in New Jersey. She is married to an ELCA pastor and is the mother of three children, the oldest of whom is transgender. Workshops included safety basics, welcoming language in worship, what scripture has to say about homosexuality, bisexuality visibility, and parents sharing stories of when their children came out and how the church was both helpful and hurtful.

We Love... is being planned again for the fall of 2020.

Bern, Leesport Supports World Hunger

Bern gets in the Farming Spirit to Raise Funds for ELCA World Hunger



Ministry often surprises us. Our congregations work hard to meet many needs across the United States and around the globe. Feeding the hungry is one of those needs. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35. When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and welcome the stranger, we are encountering and caring for Jesus.

This past September Bern Lutheran Church in Leesport set out to raise enough money to buy one farm from ELCA World Hunger (ELCA Good Gifts). Over the course of four weeks, hundreds of dollars began pouring in. The spirit of the project was

evident throughout. Jane Battaglieri, Bern's Music Director, even enjoyed adding some special music in the spirit of the project. During one service, the song sung before announcing the total was "The Farmer in the Dell" and the postlude was "Old MacDonald." The people of Bern came together during their God's Global Barnyard project and their generosity was overwhelming! By the end of the project in October, a total of \$3,000 was raised!

The Rev. Phyllis Wolkenhauer was especially overjoyed at the success of the whole project. She wrote, "I think \$3,000.00 was a complete surprise to all of us. The day the final total was calculated, we received a letter encouraging us to participate in the ELCA World Hunger appeal and take advantage of the matching funds currently available. In the blink of an eye, the Lord increased our offerings to total \$6,000. What a gift!"



***Never underestimate the power of prayerful giving
and of a congregation coming together
to make an impact upon a world in need!***

Learning Ministries Day 2020

Saturday, January 25, 2020 (snow date Saturday, February 1)
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. @ Union Lutheran Church, Schnecksville

Theme: Vision 2020

Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Brenda Smith,
Program Director, ELCA Faith and Book of Faith
(Visit nepasynod.org for more information)

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