

2022 BULLETIN OF REPORTS

ASSEMBLY
June 10-11, 2022

GAINING STRENGTH



STRONGER TOGETHER

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD
of the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

35th Annual Synod Assembly
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
June 10-11, 2022

2022 Online Synod Assembly Program

Friday, June 10, 2022

12:30 - 1:00 PM Gathering Music

1:00 - 3:00 PM Plenary Session One

Order for Opening Assembly
Adoption of the Program
Introduction of Guests/Test Vote
Report of the Bishop
“Stronger Together”
Report of the Nominating Committee
First Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel
First Ballot
Announcements

3:30 - 5:30 PM Plenary Session Two

Opening Prayer
Report of the First Ballot, Second Ballot
Comments by Mr. Jim Jennings, ELCA Church Council
Address by Rev. Kim Vaughn, Churchwide Representative
Report of the Treasurer
Presentation of 2023 Spending Proposal
Mission Interpreter Stories
Introduction of Candidates to the Roster
Acknowledgements: New to Roster, Retirements, & Anniversaries
50th Anniversary Video
Announcements

6:30 - 7:30 PM Worship

Saturday, June 11, 2022

10:00 - 12:00 PM Plenary Session Three

Opening Worship
Report of the Vice President
Synod Council Report
“Stronger Together”
Second Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel
“Going Beyond”
Mission Interpreter Stories
Report of the Secretary
Constitution Committee Report
Announcements

1:00 - 3:00 PM Plenary Session Four

Opening Prayer
Report on Second Ballot, Third Ballot if needed
Presentation of the 2023 Compensation Guidelines
“Stronger Together”
Third Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel
Installation: Deans, Synod Council Members, Officers
Unfinished business
Announcements
Order for the Closing of an Assembly, Closing Worship
Closing Hymn

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Then Jesus began to say to them... “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.” [Mark 13:7-8]

The advice given here by Jesus – ‘do not be alarmed’ – seems to be written for us and these times we live in. From May 2021 through May 2022, the global pandemic of Covid-19 still had a grievous impact on our lives and our life together as synod. Then, starting in February, the Russian invasion of Ukraine filled our screens and our prayers, as we all were heartbroken and horrified by the violence, destruction and loss of life – but also moved and heartened by the courage and tenacity of the Ukrainian people. In both circumstances, it has been inspiring to see the strong responses of people from across our synod. Many congregations have taken such great care as we slowly and safely emerge from pandemic restrictions – ready to return to them should the situation change. And many of our worshipping communities have risen up and worked together to support humanitarian aid for Ukraine. They stand ready to support and receive refugees, and are in deep prayer for all involved – week after week, in regular Sunday worship as well as holding special services and vigils.

Increasingly as well, I have seen a resilience, a readiness for action, and a willingness to partner that has been the work of the Spirit, bearing much fruit in hearts, homes and churches across Northeastern PA, even through this drear and difficult pandemic season. We are coming to understand, now more than ever, that we are indeed STRONGER TOGETHER. And that combining our strengths and relying fully on our Source of all strength – our Almighty God – is our best way forward.

That WAY is the way of Jesus. And we continue to describe it here in NEPS as a “three-lane highway” – three VITAL SIGN GOALS that we as synod are traveling towards, with Jesus leading the way – in truth, and for life – moving and lifting us toward his new and everlasting life.

Here’s an update on all three Goals:

GROWING YOUNG

This Vital Sign Goal was the centerpiece of our 2021 Synod Assembly in June and our “Ministry Laboratory” or “Min-Lab” in August. Congregations across the synod continue to focus on this nationwide renewal movement grounded in being and acting as a Jesus-centered community that is committed to engaging and retaining people of all ages, especially those 15-29 years.

A big step forward – in April, **Stacey Burke** assumed the new role as our Synod’s GROWING YOUNG COORDINATOR. She is deeply committed and excited to bring together congregations, youth leaders, and leaders of all kinds, to coordinate ideas, strategies and the common values and mission we share in this work. She will focus the next several months on learning and listening, especially to youth, young adults and young families. She will also work closely with

me, with **Pastor Lauren Applegate**, and the Youth, Young Adult and Families Ministry Team, to bring resources together for these efforts – including support from the ELCA and our ecumenical partners (Episcopal, UCC, Presbyterian, Moravian, United Methodist).

I believe that every congregation in our synod is called to play an important and meaningful role in this GY work – even if you don't have a lot of youth in worship or involved in your church life. We're all Growing Younger, together.

GAINING STRENGTH

This Vital Sign Goal declares two realities: that our synod is already filled with God-given strengths; and when we combine those strengths, we can go further, faster and longer, bringing more along and having more to share. Over the next five years, we will be striving to:

- Help our leaders and congregations identify their strengths;
- Help link leaders and congregations together to share and multiply those strengths;
- By 2026 – every pastor, deacon, and congregation with the will to do so, will be engaged in some kind of active, vital, sustainable ministry partnership.

To reach these goals, two synod staff will offer primary support: **Pastor Mike Bennethum**, our Director of Evangelical Mission; and **Pastor Rachael Dietz**, our Executive Associate for Leadership. We will also be working with these three **OUTSIDE PARTNERS**:

- **Our ELCA churchwide partners** and their practical and inspirational workshops for clergy and lay leaders, called “**Congregational Vitality Workshops**.” Since the beginning of the pandemic, these semi-annual Congregational Vitality Workshops have occurred online without cost to participants, making these training events accessible to more of our congregations. Over 20 congregations have signed up for these sessions so far in 2022, and are seeing strong results.
- **Pastor Douglas Hill**, who is helping congregations and pastors across the ELCA to identify and build on their strengths, and form new and stronger partnerships across their communities – not just to survive, but to thrive and spread new life in Christ. In February Pastor Doug helped us launch our first “**Gaining Strength Cohort**” – including 11 pastors from across the synod – in an 18-month process of growth, mutual support, skill development, and spiritual enrichment, all of which they will share with their congregations and with other colleagues and communities in NEPS.
- We are also in conversation with the “Center for Congregational Health” (www.healthychurch.org) who has resources and expertise to help us develop customized “mission, vision and values” workshops, especially for congregations in transition or without the resources to call a fulltime pastor.

All of these goals and partnerships are meant to help us understand our strengths and make our Lutheran witness stronger and more sustainable for decades to come, so we can be more resilient and ready for challenges and new opportunities to love God's people, care for God's creation, and spread the Good News of Christ's life, death and resurrection, for the eternal life of all the world. Speaking of that Good News...

GOING BEYOND DEATH TO LIFE

This Vital Sign Goal ties us to the very grounding of our Christian witness, and mystery of faith: ***Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.*** Firm in this belief, we can live life fully and share ourselves completely, since in Christ “we live and move and have our being.” [Acts 17:28] In boldness, we can face our fears and even death itself. It only makes sense, then, that this work would be guided by a person trained as both a chaplain and as a diagnostic theologian – someone gifted in both spirituality and data interpretation – **Deacon Travis Woodfield**, our synod’s Director of Congregational Legacy and Purpose.

With this Vital Sign Goal, we hope to help every congregation work out a plan for a faithful, lasting legacy – whether they are 20 years old, or 200. For smaller congregations especially, we also want to help them find the right partners for vital, sustainable ministry – not just for convenience or survival, but because they share some common purpose or potential. And should a congregation be moving towards ending, we want to help them diagnose their situation and make the most faithful decisions for themselves and for their community. By the end of 2023, we want to be ready to deploy “legacy and purpose teams,” made up of retired clergy and other expert outside partners, to walk alongside those congregations in this important work, guiding them in spiritual and practical matters.

One outstanding OUTSIDE PARTNER we are talking with, to help us in this work, is an organization called “**Partners for Sacred Places**” (www.sacredplaces.org). This non-denominational group provides valuable expertise to advise congregational councils and pastors on how to renovate, repurpose, share, and even to make decisions on when and how to eventually sell their property and physical assets. We hope to partner with PSP to provide consistent, compassionate, and faithful processes across the synod.

A FEW MORE BIG IDEAS

Supporting and connecting across all three Vital Sign Goals – these additional ideas are bubbling up from congregations and mission districts across the synod:

Revisit the Synod Authorized Lay Minister (SALM) program. This program and process once made it possible to identify, train and deploy qualified lay persons, who were in congregations doing vital ministry, but located in places where it was hard to find or sustain a fulltime pastor. Those SALMs were assigned only to one place for a limited time, and given permission by the Bishop to carry out many of the responsibilities of a pastor – including the sacraments. Though we still have some faithful SALMs serving in NEPS, the program generating new SALMs was suspended several years ago, having become too difficult to run and supervise. The time has come to reconsider new versions of this idea, for this new time and place. We already have one version in a pilot program – called the “Pastoral Care Provider Program” – which we can now consider for greater expansion. There are other new models to consider, working well in several synods.

We can also now engage with new partners, willing to help us train and manage the training and supervisory process, including:

- Many willing and experienced **retired pastors and deacons**;

- **The United Lutheran Seminary**, which is ready to commit time and resources to help us to develop especially, the Lutheran components of education and formation;
- **The Moravian Seminary**, which has been a valued training partner for us in the past, and who is ready to deepen that partnership in ways customized for us;
- And a new partner, called “**Neighborhood Seminary**,” an online learning environment, which we’ve just learned about from our partnership with Pastor Doug Hill (see above).

Continue Enhancing our Communications. Under the leadership of **Pastor Lauren Wolfe Blatt**, Director of Communications, **our redesigned website** premiered this spring, with a fresh look meant to be welcoming to the outside world, especially pastors and deacons considering a move to our synod. Websites are always in need of new content and continuous improvement, so we invite comments and suggestions.

But being STRONGER TOGETHER also calls us all to be better connected and willing to play our part in sharing and managing information and ideas, while being careful of confidentiality and privacy. We are in the process of rolling out a much-improved **database system**, called “**Realm**,” which will soon be accessible by password to pastors, deacons, and selected congregational office staff and key leaders in congregations. **Eric Gombert**, our Director of Operations, is spearheading this work, along with **Laurie Christman**, Leadership Support Coordinator; and **Debbie Skinner**, Mission Support Coordinator.

Over the next year, we also hope to **conduct a communications audit**, to determine how we can streamline our process and better serve and connect with each other cross the synod. The Synod Council is also pursuing the creation of a robust **crisis communication plan** to address emergencies and both our internal and external contacts.

Become the Best Place for Deacons in the ELCA. We already have a dynamic group of strong and Spirit-led Deacons serving a variety of essential and exciting roles here in NEPS. At the same time, many of us here and across the church don’t fully understand what these “Ministers of Word and Service” are called to do, especially when considered alongside our other roster, the Ministers of Word and Sacrament, or Pastors. Deacons can certainly serve in congregations; but many others serve in hospitals, agencies, institutions, universities, non-profit organizations, and even for-profit corporations.

But as God leads us to seek and find more connections and partnerships across our synod – what if Deacons were to play a leading role in encouraging and empowering those connections? Let’s say, a group of 6 congregations were interested in building and sharing a prison ministry. A Minister of Word and Service – a Deacon – with specialized training in Prison Ministry could be called to come in and help those congregations establish that mission. Perhaps they are called for a year, or three years – or perhaps to a permanent call, where they continue to build that ministry and engage the baptized members in that work.

Deacons can be “free agents” in this way – shared by several congregations, or working across the Synod in what’s called a “Synod call” – working in a way that isn’t as tied down to one location; and that allows the Pastors in the synod to focus on what they are called to do: Word

and Sacrament ministry in congregations. This Big Idea could be the “glue” that helps us reach out to people across the synod, in new places and in new ways; and attract and deploy more of these ordained Ministers of Word and Service from across the church to serve God in NEPA.

THE FINAL WORD – AND THE BIGGER PICTURE

Where can this all lead? Today, we are 249 congregations, with three synod authorized worshipping communities, bringing together over 118,000 baptized members. The data projections all show, these two numbers getting smaller. In five years – by the end of 2026 – what might this Synod look like? I believe God is calling us to have new eyes to see, new ears to hear. If we work together, if we focus on the way of Jesus – I believe God is leading us towards becoming a closer-knit synod of interconnected, vitalized, sustainable WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES, made up of congregations who share their pastors, deacons, and other support staff; who lift up and empower more lay persons to play major roles; and who are working on ministries and missions that make a real difference in people’s lives.

At this very moment, this is already happening, for sure, in a number of places. We already have a significant number of congregations working together in ways that can be truly described as “interconnected, vitalized, sustainable worshipping communities.” What might be the total number of such communities be, here in the year 2022 – is it 40? Or 50? Or 60?

What if, by 2026, we doubled that number? To 120 such worshipping communities? Interwoven webs of congregations, ready to be resilient and relevant, into the next century and beyond.

Is it possible? Can we do it? ***“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.’”*** [Mark 10:27]

If God wills it – and y’all are willing – I’m ready to go! ***“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”*** [Philippians 4:17]

In Christ, we are STRONGER TOGETHER!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher deForest". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Christopher deForest, Your Bishop

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Here we are, post- ... well, post-2021.

As I'm writing this report, spring has finally sprung, the deer have once again eaten my tulips, and, for runners, race season is back.

The Boston Marathon has just held its 126th race. It has a reputation not only for requiring fast qualifying times to even be able to participate in the race, but also for its hills. The course's most infamous hill is called "Heartbreak Hill," a brutally steep incline that runners face at mile 20 (of 26.1 total miles) – an equal challenge of physical endurance and emotional spirit. Its existence and location -- close enough to the end, but still miles away from the finish -- has utterly deflated, and even defeated, many participants.

Many years ago, I completed a marathon. I have encountered "Mile 20". Believe me, there need not be a hill at that point of the race to make you feel like you can't possibly find it within yourself to go on. And yet, you do go on. One foot in front of the other. Because there is that part of you, however dim in that moment, that does believe it is possible and worthwhile to keep going.

In my mind, the years 2021 and 2022 feel like what I imagine a runner feels as they see the infamously steep incline of Heartbreak Hill unfolding before them at mile 20 of the Boston Marathon: We can vividly imagine the thrill of completion and being able to say, "We made it!" as we continue to innovate and create new paths that excite us, but the uphill challenges in the immediate (rising COVID numbers, changing masking guidelines, continuing concern over lasting illness) loom before us and drain us. We feel the push and pull of emotions; a range of energized to exhausted, emptied to empowered.

But we are blessed to have each other as we run this race together.

As Chairman of the NEPA Synod Council, I can attest that the NEPA Synod Council is a strong team that endured through this "Mile 20" year that is mid-2021-to-mid-2022. Step by step, decision by decision, we moved forward and made solid progress on matters at hand.

To highlight, here are three matters of decisive action and continuing progress among many others this past year on the part of Synod Council that stand out to me as the Chairman:

1. Perhaps the most agonizing decision made by Council members was the decision to hold this year's Synod Assembly virtually – NEPA's third consecutive assembly to be

held in this manner. This decision was born of much deliberation and contemplation on the part of our entire Synod Council, made at a time when the transmission numbers were low but uncertainty was high. Because it was, in the end, that uncertainty was about the only thing council members were all certain of, the council risked making an unpopular decision and decided that safety took priority, and once again we will meet each other online. However, as we get closer to the event and knowing the value of being together in-person, Synod Council is hopeful that congregations and Mission Districts work together to organize meet-ups and watch parties for the Assembly, congregating and having fellowship in smaller numbers where it allows.

2. In good news, the Synod is making significant progress toward arrow-straight and crystal-clear financial reporting, which will benefit the council for what we hope will be years to come. Under

the leadership of our current Treasurer Don Boyer and Director of Operations Eric Gombert (and having begun under our former Treasurer Don Dillman), the Finance Committee's dogged devotion to this mission is garnering "clean" audit reports for the Synod, providing organization to its special funds, and establishing updated policies for financial decisions and security measures for financial transactions. Through this effort, the Synod has a trustworthy foundation of financial understanding laid by the hard work of this committee, upon which the Synod can plan and build a framework for future financial stewardship decisions.

3. Finally, as we move forward in work as a council, one of the most intriguing and inspiring projects has been discovering how our many personalities provide strength to the Synod Council. Synod Council's Program Committee has been facilitating an all-member walk-through of the Clifton Strengths Assessment, a set of questions which helps individuals discover their set of strengths and how those strengths interplay with leadership and within teams, on Synod Council and outside of it. Council members have said this assessment confirms and affirms truths about themselves (and even provides some surprises), and it has enlightened all of us about our council's current composition of talents and strengths – a composition that is delightfully diverse. This insight helps all of us match the right projects (or portions of projects) to the right hands, and it has already helped us identify where we, as a council, may have to consciously pay careful attention, given fewer representatives of certain areas of strength. It is exciting to see the unfolding work that will support fruitful and fulfilling terms on Synod Council.

For further details of these and other Synod Council decisions made throughout this past year, I'll refer you to the minutes of our meetings from mid-2021 through mid-2022, which can be found on the NEPA website.

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This past year especially, Council members have participated in meetings that have run longer than usual. I'm sure you can identify with the struggle of once-simple decisions made so much more complex by the external circumstances of a world dealing with COVID. I thank all of our council members for their dedication and alertness throughout the meetings!

I'd like to take a moment to thank those that are crossing the finish line of their Synod Council terms:

Thomas Engle, Lenna Harris, Ruth Major, and Cheryl Meinschein

I'd like to thank those Synod Council Members still running this race with us:

Brian Beissel, Patty Corcoran, Jim Doxsey, Chris Druckenmiller, Joshua Fink, Andy Hottenstein, Elizabeth Leibenguth, Gregory Frey, Louise McCloughan, Amy Mietelski, Wes Poole, Spencer Steele, Cassie Teter, Dan Tobey, along with Bishop Christopher DeForest, DEM Mike Bennethum, Treasurer Don Boyer, and Secretary Carl Shankweiler.

Further, I'd like to thank all those who have considered jumping in the race and who are currently running for seats on the Council. Thank you for being willing to go the distance with this team!

Finally, my personal thanks to the Bishop, Bishop's Assistant Rachael Dietz, and Secretary Shankweiler, who provide insight (Bishop), organization (Rachael), and oversight (Carl) to our Synod Council meetings.

Kristen Edelman-Weiner

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(The following changes took place between May 1, 2021, and May 1, 2022.)

ROSTER CHANGES FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Ordinations

Harvey, Scott, ordained December 12, 2021

Kluever, Halle, ordained August 1, 2021

Received from Other Synods

Hacker, Matthew, from East Central Synod of Wisconsin, November 21, 2021.

Hacker, Rachel Z., from East Central Synod of Wisconsin, March 3, 2022.

Mathisen, Richard, from Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, February 8, 2022.

Neubauer, Janelle S., from Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, July 15, 2021.

Transferred to Other Synods

Clayborne, Thomas D., to New England Synod, October 6, 2021.

Csellak, Laura A., to Upstate New York Synod, October 1, 2021.

Haab, Russell, to New Jersey Synod, September 29, 2021.

Hersch, Ryan, to Grand Canyon Synod, September 7, 2021.

Jaskiewicz, Tricia, to New England Synod, August 31, 2021.

Middeke-Conlin, Rebecca, to Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, July 6, 2021.

Recher, Julie P., to Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, June 6, 2021.

Sipe, Martha, to New England Synod, August 16, 2021.

Swanson, Mark, to Upstate New York Synod, June 1, 2021.

Resigned from the Roster

None

Removed from the Roster

Buzzard, Paul, as per Synod Council action January 15, 2022.

Deaths

Boyer, Brenda Jean, August 29, 2021

Boyer, Richard Robert, July 25, 2021

Dewalt, Marvin, September 25, 2021

Koehler, Roy Henry, Jr., January 13, 2022

Kramp, Paul F., Jr., December 22, 2021

North, Debra, June 1, 2021

Papada, James, February 7, 2022

Sauers, Robert F., February 8, 2022

Schlack, Theodore Calvin, August 26, 2021

Sherman, Franklin Eugene, August 31, 2021

Tietbohl, Augustus, October 22, 2021

The Rev. Brenda Jean Boyer, daughter of Howard W. and Laura I. (née Lockwood) Boyer, was born June 17, 1945, in West Reading, Pennsylvania. She graduated from Albright College

(1967) and received her Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (1981). She also earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (1971). Following her ordination by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on April 8, 1984, Pastor Boyer served Salem, Audenried, and St. Paul, Beaver Meadows (1984-1989); Zion, Packerton, and Grace, Lehighon (1989-1994); Trinity, Lansford (1994-1996); Zion (Red Church), Orwigsburg (1997-2007); and Grace, East Stroudsburg (2007-2008). More recently, Pastor Boyer served Trinity Memorial, Allentown, as interim pastor. Pastor Boyer is survived by her sister, Beryl Wanner.

The Rev. Richard Robert Boyer, son of Ralph A. Boyer Jr. and Elise E. (Long) Boyer, was born September 6, 1930, in Columbus, Ohio. He graduated from Muhlenberg College (1952) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1955).

Ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1955, he served as a missionary with the Lutheran Church in Argentina as pastor of the Lutheran congregation in Berisso, Argentina, and to start a new congregation in LaPlata. His other calls included Grace, Bethlehem (1958-1972); Trinity, Bangor (1972-1985); the Centreport-Mohrsville Parish consisting of Salem Belleman's and St. Timothy, Mohrsville (1985-1991); and St. John, Mahoning (1991-1999). He served the wider church on the synod's Board of Home Missions and the World Missions Committee.

Pastor Boyer married Ruth Eileen Trexler on August 2, 1952; their four children survive him: Michael Boyer, the Rev. Timothy Boyer, Deborah Buzzard, and Rebekah McFadden. He is also survived by this wife Emily (Peknik) Whitman, Ruth having died in 1993 as well as his second wife, Joan (Hansen) Neumann, with whom he was married from 1998 to 2003.

The Rev. Marvin Edward Dewalt, son of Harry E. and Jennie M. (Morgan) Dewalt, was born in Pitman, Pennsylvania, on June 3, 1927. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he graduated from Muhlenberg College (1950) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1953).

Following ordination by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania on May 28, 1953, Pastor Dewalt served Grace, East Bangor (1953-1955); as a mission developer for St. John, Morrisville (1955-1959); St. Paul, Reading (1959-1969); St. Paul, Oley (1969-1973); and St. Joseph (Hill), Boyertown (1969-1992). Following his retirement Pastor Dewalt continued his pastoral ministry in interim and visitation capacities at Christ, Mertztown; St. Paul, Fleetwood; Atonement, Wyomissing; and St. Paul, Douglassville. He served the wider church through the Executive Board of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod and other committees.

Pastor Dewalt married Gloria LaRue Snyder on June 5, 1950. Mrs. Dewalt survives him along with their four sons Mark, Paul, Timothy, and Luke.

The Rev. Roy Henry Koehler Jr., son of Roy H. Koehler Sr., and Pauline (Petko) Koehler, was born in Kreidersville on August 10, 1942. He served in the army during the Vietnam War. He graduated from Temple University (1973) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (1978).

Following ordination on March 18, 1979, by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, he served the following congregations: St. James, Geigertown (1979-1983), Trinity, Lansford (1983-1993), and St. Paul, Mertztown (1993-2005). In his retirement he served as interim at Trinity, Lansford, until his death.

On October 13, 1973, Pastor Koehler married Roseann Zimmerman, who survives him along with their children Andrea Koehler, Amy Weiner, Ryan Koehler, and Lee Koehler.

The Rev. Paul F. Kramp Jr., son of Paul F. Kramp Sr. and Hattie Marie (Johnson) Kramp, was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on June 29, 1926. A graduate of Gettysburg College (1947) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (1950), he received an M.A. degree from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University (1965).

Following his ordination by the Central Pennsylvania Synod on May 23, 1950, Pastor Kramp served the following congregations: mission organizer, Drexel Hill (1950-1951); Messiah, Newtown Square (1951-1963); Little Zion, Telford (1963-1977); associate pastor, Christ, Allentown (1977-1992). Among his wider church involvements, he served as chairperson of the board of the Lutheran Home at Topton.

On July 22, 1950, he was married to Eleanor Delores Sultzbach, who died in 1991. They were the parents of four children: Kathryn Kramp, David Kramp, Brian Kramp, and Judith Post. In 1997 he married Barbara Davis, who died in 2019.

The Rev. Debra Ann (Sass) North, daughter of Charles and Virginia (Morton) Sass, was born in Joliet, Illinois, on May 27, 1954. She graduated from Rutgers University (1978), Montclair University with a Masters in Environmental Management (2000), and Moravian Theological Seminary (2011).

Following her ordination by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on September 24, 2011, Pastor North served St. John, Nanticoke and St. Mark, Pond Hill (2011-2017), followed by Faith, Blakeslee from January 2018 to the time of her death.

On June 15, 1996, Pastor North married Edward North; she is also survived by a daughter, Jennifer Riale, and a son, Chris North.

The Rev. James C. Papada, son of Anthony and Blanche (Klock) Papada, was born in Pottsville on September 20, 1939. He graduated from Susquehanna University (1961) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1964).

Following his ordination by the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod on August 6, 1964, Pastor Papada served as pastor of the following congregations: Grace, Lehighton (1964-1967); Friedens, Oley (1967-1974); Good Shepherd, Wilkes-Barre (1974-1980); Grace, Shillington (1980-1989); New Bethel, Kempton (1990-2003). Part of his service to the wider church was serving as Chairman of the Board at Bear Creek Camp.

On August 10, 1963, Pastor Papada was married to Ann L. Schaefer, who survives him; he is also survived by their sons Chris and Benjamin.

The Rev. Robert F. Sauers, son of Harry and Florence (Dolan) Sauers, was born in West Hazleton on October 20, 1926. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He graduated from Muhlenberg College (1951) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1954).

Pastor Sauers was ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States on June 13, 1954. He first served in one of those “adjacent states” at St. Stephens, Wilmington, Delaware (1954-1956) before going to St. Peter, Hughestown (1956-1992). Following his retirement he was interim pastor at St. John, Wilkes-Barre, for eleven years.

On June 20, 1953, Pastor Sauers was married to Thelma “Sally” Long, who died in 2015. They are survived by their children Robert Sauers, Sharon Pane, Linda Getson, Robin Balent, and Leslie Sauers. Among his grandchildren are two pastors, the Rev. Robert Sauers III and the Rev. Scott Sauers.

The Rev. Theodore Calvin Schlack, son of Richard and Alma Marie (Rentz) Schlack was born on April 18, 1928, in Philadelphia. He graduated from Gettysburg College (1950) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (1953).

Following his ordination by the Central Pennsylvania Synod on May 27, 1953, Pastor Schlack served the following calls: Assistant Pastor, Christ, York (1953-1954); Mission Developer and Pastor, St. Luke, Devon (1954-1967); and Christ, Allentown (1967-1993). Pastor Schlack also had extensive service to the wider church and community, such as serving on the board of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

On June 21, 1952, Pastor Schlack married Marion Markle Jones, who died in 2014. They are survived by their children Virginia Rothenberger, Richard Schlack, and Steven Schlack.

The Rev. Dr. Franklin Eugene Sherman, son of John F. and Helen Sherman (later Helen Holben, nee Hazard), was born in New York City on August 15, 1928. He graduated from Muhlenberg College (1949), the University of Chicago (M.A., 1952; Ph.D., 1961), and the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary (1953).

Ordained by the Illinois Synod on May 16, 1956, Dr. Sherman served a pastoral call to Advent, Chicago (1956-1958). He then embarked on an extensive teaching career, including the University of Iowa Religious Studies Department (1958-1961), by invitation of the Lutheran World Federation to Mansfield College in Oxford, England; and as Religious Ethics Professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for twenty-three years beginning in 1966, including ten years as dean of the faculty. He served as a visiting professor in Switzerland, Israel, Zimbabwe, and Japan. Dr. Sherman became the founding director of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding at Muhlenberg College (1989-1996). In retirement he served the ELCA in the Department of Ecumenical Affairs.

On June 24, 1953, Dr. Sherman married Joan Margery Kendall. Following her death in 2006, he shared a ten-year marriage with Loreen Stout. He is survived by children Mark Sherman, David Sherman, and Leslie Sherman.

The Rev. Augustus Valentine Tietbohl, son of Ralph H. and Ruth R. (Stibler) Tietbohl, was born on September 3, 1924, in Williamsport. After serving in the Army Signal Corps during World War II, he graduated from Susquehanna University (1948) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (1951).

Following his ordination by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania on May 27, 1951, Pastor Tietbohl served the following calls: Faith, Philadelphia (1951-1954), St. John, Nanticoke (1954-1962); and New Jerusalem, Saucon Valley (1962-1990). Pastor Tietbohl was active in synod and community ministries, serving on the Board of Directors of Luther Manor and the synod's Executive Board.

On May 16, 1953, Pastor Tietbohl was married to Josephine M. Kammerer; they were parents of three children: Mark, Diane, and Joel. He is survived by his wife and their son Mark Tietbohl.

2021-22 Pastoral Changes

Ash-Flashner, Kathleen, St. Paul, Summer Hill, to retired, October 1, 2021.

Busteed, Thomas, Faith, Whitehall, to Zion, Old Zionsville, February 13, 2022.

Button, Mary, a pastor of the Metro New York Synod, serving St. Luke, Greeley, May 7, 2022.

Clayborne, Thomas Daniel, Transitional Pastor, Emmanuel, Bath, to retired, August 1, 2021.

Csellak, Laura A., Christ's United, Ashland, ending August 31, 2021, to Upstate New York Synod.

Decker, Aaron, Bethany, West Reading, to Theological Educator, Bolivia, October 8, 2021.

Hacker, Matthew from East Central Synod of Wisconsin, to St. Michael Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Nativity, Allentown, November 21, 2021.

Hall, Jennifer, Trinity, Hecktown, to St. John, Nazareth, February 1, 2022.

Hamm, MaryAnn, St. John, Kutztown, to retired, February 1, 2022.

Hand, Lesley, Salem, Fleetwood, to retired, July 1, 2021.

Harvey, Scott, newly ordained to St. John, Sayre, December 13, 2021.

Henry, Robin, correcting an error, not "on leave from call" but "on disability," 2018.

Henry, Robin, to retired, February 1, 2022 (NOTE: Later changed back to the active roster, "on disability," as per Portico and Lincoln Financial requirements.)

Heppe, Melinda, St. John, Shenandoah, to retired, February 1, 2022.

Keltz, Denise, Good Shepherd, Reading, to retired, February 1, 2022.

Melber, Kenneth T., Jr., Friedens, New Ringgold, and Zion, Orwigsburg, to the Trachsville-Towamensing Parish, January 1, 2022.

Odgren, Jeffrey, Faith United, Nescopeck, to retired, November 1, 2021.

Pfeffer, Peggy Sue, St. John, Friedensburg, to retired, December 1, 2021.

Rowe, David, Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven, to retired, December 31, 2021.

Santiago, Rashion, Heidelberg, Heidelberg, to St. Paul, Tannersville, December 8, 2021.

Steele, Spencer, Associate, Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Emmaus, to Trinity, Hecktown, February 21, 2022.

Swanson, Mark, Friedens, Hegins, and St. James, Pitman, ending April 30, 2021, to the Upstate New York Synod

Warntz, Daniel, a pastor of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, serving Faith United Nescopeck, April 1, 2022.

Wimmer, Mark, Vice President for Church Relations, Diakon, to retired, February 1, 2021.

Wolfe Blatt, Lauren, interim Calvary, Laureldale, to called pastor Calvary Laureldale, May 1, 2022.

Wolkenhauer, Alan, Trinity, Reading, to retired, February 1, 2022.

Wolkenhauer, Phyllis, Bern, Leesport, to retired, February 1, 2022.

ROSTER CHANGES FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

Ordinations:

Talley, Dawn, May 1, 2022.

Received from Other Synods

None

Transferred to Other Synods

None.

Resigned from Roster

None

Removed from Roster

None

Deaths

Meckes, Verna Eleanor

Sister Verna E. Meckes, daughter of Alvin and Hattie (Heffelfinger) Sell, was born on July 12, 1924, in Allentown. Following her consecration as a deaconess on February 23, 1975, she served Redeemer Lutheran Church, Allentown, in Christian education and youth ministry.

Sister Verna married Roy H. Meckes on February 19, 1949, and they became parents to three children: Susan, Dale, and Roy. She is survived by her son Dale Meckes Sr.

Changes in Positions

Grauel, Jacqueline, to retired, January 1, 2022

CONGREGATIONAL CHANGES

Grace, Leighton, last service September 26, 2021.

St. John, Shenandoah, closed as of January 15, 2022, as per Synod Council action.

St. Michael, Hamburg, withdrew from the ELCA as recognized by Synod Council Jan. 15, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

The Synod Council met five times between the conclusion of the 2021 assembly and the end of April in 2022: July 17, 2021; October 16, 2021; January 15, 2022; January 22, 2022 (a special, single-purpose meeting); and April 9, 2022 (followed by an email vote on two additional resolutions).

This report includes the resolutions adopted at those meetings. The numbers preceding the resolutions indicate the year, month, and sequence number of the resolution. Recommendations for assembly action appear in bold. All items are presented for review by the assembly. The complete minutes of the council meetings are available upon request from the synod secretary.

Assembly

(2021.07.01) *Resolved*, That the following people be appointed by the Synod Council as voting members of the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

The Rev. Bradley Carroll (Lehigh Mission District)
Mr. Beau deForest (lay male)

(2022.01.09) *Resolved*, That the 2022 synod assembly be held virtually.

(2022.04.07) *Resolved*, That the following resolution concerning the 2022 assembly program be recommended to the 2021 Synod Assembly:

Resolved, that the 2022 Assembly program as printed in the Bulletin of Reports be adopted.

(2022.04.08) *Resolved*, That the 2022 Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be held on June 10-11, virtually.

Budget and Finance

(2022.01.04) *Resolved*, That a grant of \$6,000 from the Mission Development Fund (formerly Prosser, Pahse, Mission Fund) be given to the Lutheran Witness along the Delaware in support of their witness to the Gospel.

(2022.01.05) *Resolved*, That Campbell, Rappold & Yurasits LLP be appointed to audit the fiscal year ending January 31, 2022.

(2022.01.06) *Resolved*, That the 2022 Spending Plan of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be amended by increasing the Deferred Revenue Available for Appropriations by \$50,000.

(2022.01.07) *Resolved*, That the amounts designated below as housing allowances shall apply to the calendar year 2022 and all future years unless otherwise provided by this Synod Council:

The Rev. Christopher deForest, \$25,000
The Rev. Rachael Dietz, \$30,000

(2022.01.08) *Resolved*, That the 2022 executive, support, and contracted staff compensation be set in accordance with the schedule accompanying this resolution, reflecting total compensation for executive and contracted staff and the hourly rate for support staff. (Numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar.) The salary increase for all employees is 5.9%. (NOTE: The chart accompanying this resolution appears as Appendix A to these minutes.)

(2022.01.13) *Resolved*, That spending policies for synod funds for 2022 be established as follows:

- 8% of the Mission Development Fund
- 8% of the Kelchner Fund
- 10% of the Student Education Fund
- 6% of the Leadership Development Fund
- 8% of the Social Ministry Fund

(2022.04.05) *Resolved*, That the following resolution concerning the 2023 spending proposal be recommended to the 2022 Synod Assembly:

Resolved, That the 2023 spending proposal (February 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2023 spending proposal no later than its January 2023 meeting, making any necessary adjustment to the proposal in light of both realistic anticipation of receipts and synod priorities (in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer with respect to the ELCA portion thereof).

(2022.04.06) *Resolved*, That spending policies for synod funds for fiscal year 2023 be established as follows:

- 8% (c. \$56,858) of the Mission Development Fund
- 8% (c. \$102,735) of the Clyde Kelchner Fund
- 10% (c. 15,184) of the Student Education Fund
- 6% (c. \$5,722) of the Leadership Development Fund
- 8% (c. \$39,240) of the Social Ministry Fund

Calls, Appointments, and Roster Maintenance

(2021.07.08) *Resolved*, That a call to special service be issued for Deacon Candidate Dawn Talley to serve St. Joseph Center in Scranton and Geisinger Wyoming Valley as Chaplain, beginning August 1, 2021.

(2021.07.09) *Resolved*, That a one year call to special service be issued for the Rev. Kim Truebenbach to serve as interim pastor of St. Joseph Hill, Boyertown, from August 1, 2021, through July 31, 2022.

(2022.01.12) *Resolved*, That a term call to special service be issued to Rev. Timothy Garman to serve Peace Lutheran Church, Reading for a period of one year, beginning January 8, 2022.

(2021.07.06) *Resolved*, That in accordance with sections 7.31.16. and 7.52.22. of the ELCA Constitution, “on leave from call” status be approved as follows:

- Pastor (first year): The Rev. Katie Lyon
- Pastor (second year): The Rev. Mark Christy

(2021.10.07) *Resolved*, That in accordance with sections 7.31.16. and 7.52.22. of the ELCA Constitution, “on leave from call” status be approved as follows:

Clergy (fourth year, study leave): The Rev. Elizabeth Haines

(2022.04.10) *Resolved*, That in accordance with sections 7.31.16. and 7.52.22. of the ELCA Constitution, “on leave from call” status be approved as follows:

Clergy (third year): The Rev. Thomas F. Irwin Jr.

(2022.04.11) *Resolved*, That in acknowledgement of the error of granting “on leave from call” status rather than conferring disability status to the Rev. Robin Henry in 2018, the Synod Council affirms her roster status as “on disability.”

(2021.10.08) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaw 7.41.17. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leaders be granted the roster status of “retired”:

The Rev. Mark Wimmer (February 1, 2021)*

The Rev. Thomas Daniel Clayborne (August 1, 2021)

The Rev. Kathleen Ash-Flashner (October 1, 2021)

The Rev. Jeffrey Odgren (November 1, 2021)

The Rev. David Rowe (December 31, 2021)

*Pastor Wimmer’s retirement was approved at the January 30, 2021, meeting of the Synod Council but with a retirement date of January 9, 2021.

(2022.01.10) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaw 7.41.17. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leaders be granted the roster status of “retired”:

The Rev. MaryAnn Hamm (February 1, 2022)

The Rev. Denise Keltz (February 1, 2022)

The Rev. Alan Wolkenhauer (February 1, 2022)

The Rev. Phyllis Wolkenhauer (February 1, 2022)

The Rev. Robin Henry (February 1, 2022)

(2022.04.09) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaw 7.41.17. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leaders be granted the roster status of “retired”:

Deacon Jacqueline Grauel (January 1, 2022)

The Rev. Melinda Heppe (February 1, 2022)

(2022.01.02) Whereas, St. Michael Lutheran Church, Tilden Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, took the second vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA on October 31, 2021; and, Whereas, that decision is approved by the Synod Council on January 15, 2022; and,

Whereas, the ELCA Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states in Part IV.A.6. under “Dual rostering,”

In accordance with bylaw 7.31.05., a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church who enters the ordained ministry of another church body, or who serves a group schismatic from this church or from a congregation thereof, shall cease to be a member of this church. The minister’s name shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament by the synod bishop.

Therefore, *Resolved*, That the Rev. Paul Buzzard is to be removed from the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA, effective January 15, 2022.

Congregations

(2021.07.04) *Resolved*, That the Synod Council authorize Secretary Carl Shankweiler, working in partnership with the Finance Committee, to oversee and make arrangements for the sale of the real estate owned by Grace Lutheran Church, Lehighton, when that property shall have come into the synod's possession, at a price and under terms acceptable to the Executive Committee of the synod, it being understood that Grace Church's resolution authorizing the conveyance of ownership to the synod stipulates that the distribution of any remaining assets, after the payment of all legitimate bills, should be as follows: 50% to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2354 Grove Rd., Allentown, Pa. 18109, for the Synod Mission Development Fund; 12.5% to St. Matthew Lutheran Church (North Weissport), 222 Church Street, Lehighton, Pa. 18235; 12.5% to Trinity Lutheran Church, 175 S. Third St., Lehighton, Pa. 18235; 12.5% to Zion Lutheran Church (Packerton), 34 Pine St., Lehighton, Pa. 18235; and 12.5% to St. John Lutheran Church (Mahoning), 826 Mahoning Dr. West, Lehighton, Pa. 18235.

(2021.07.05) *Resolved*, That a loan in the amount of \$40,000 be made from the Church Loan Development Fund to St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Allentown. The terms of the loan will be \$40,000 with a seven-year repayment schedule at two percent interest.

(2021.10.02) RESOLUTION REGARDING CLOSURE OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SHENANDOAH, PURSUANT TO SECTION S13.24., CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Whereas, St. John's Lutheran Church (hereinafter: "St. John's ELC") is a religious organization, incorporated as a non-profit (non-stock) corporation created in or about 1870, with a principal address of 115 W. Cherry Street, Shenandoah, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, St. John's ELC owns a parsonage adjacent to the church as well as a church building, both on the same tract of land, .14 acres in size and recorded in Deed Book 0132, beginning on page 0627; and

Whereas, The ministry of St. John's ELC has declined in terms of membership and regularity of worship, to the point that (a) the Borough of Shenandoah had declared the parsonage to be unfit for human habitation, (b) the church building is no longer used for services of worship, and (c) the congregation has only a pastor and a treasurer, with no other officers or board of directors; and

Whereas, The Constitution of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod provides:
The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:

a. The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.

- b. The congregation has abandoned its property.
 - c. The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.
 - d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
 - e. The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.
- The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly. [S13.24.]; and

Whereas, The treasurer of the congregation has acknowledged that only two persons are regular contributors to the congregation, that the pastor has not been paid for at least two years, that the congregation has no insurance, that the church building is the home of rodents, and that the congregation itself is unable to care for its property in any meaningful way; and

Whereas, The lack of insurance and the dangers posed by the congregation's two deteriorating buildings require immediate attention and action to preserve the remaining assets of the congregation, in particular the real estate owned by St. John's ELC; and

Whereas, It is necessary for the synod to protect the congregation's property from further diminution in value, waste and deterioration and to protect itself from ongoing liability for the state of affairs at St. John's ELC;

Therefore, be it *Resolved*, That

1. The Synod Council, pursuant to Section S13.24. of the Constitution of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, shall hold, manage, take charge, and control the property of the congregation of St. John's ELC for the purpose of protecting any remaining assets of the congregation;
2. The treasurer of St. John's ELC shall cooperate with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in transferring responsibility for, administration of, and liquidation of the assets of St. John's ELC by executing all documents necessary to transfer title, ownership, and responsibility for the assets and liabilities of St. John's ELC to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod;
3. In accordance with *C7.01. of the ELCA's Model Constitution for Congregations all assets of St John's ELC shall be held, managed, and conveyed for the benefit and on behalf of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod;
4. The Finance Committee of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod shall have the authority to sell the property of St. John's ELC at a price approved by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council with the bishop of the synod authorized to sign any deeds or other documents necessary for the conveyance of this property to new owner(s);
5. Bishop Christopher deForest shall establish a task force to prepare a recommendation for Synod Council consideration at its first meeting in the year 2022 concerning Lutheran ministry in

Shenandoah, including the possible continuation or closure of St. John's ELC as a congregation and the role to be played by St. John's current pastor.

Approved: _____

By: _____
Northeast Pennsylvania Synod

(2021.10.03) *Resolved*, That upon advice of legal counsel, Secretary Shankweiler be authorized to make editorial changes and adjustments to the October 16, 2021, resolution concerning St. John's Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, provided that the goals of the resolution are not altered.

(2021.10.04) *Resolved*, That Secretary Shankweiler be authorized to obtain legal counsel at synod expense to deal with the issues related to the property and possible closing of St. John's, Shenandoah, with the cost for that legal assistance being covered, if possible, by the proceeds received through the sale of St. John's property.

(2021.10.05) *Resolved*, That a loan in the amount of \$15,000 be made from the Church Loan Development Fund to Hope Lutheran Church, 601 N. Front St., Reading. The terms of the loan will be \$15,000 with a seven-year repayment schedule at two percent (2%) interest.

(2021.10.06) *Resolved*, That a loan in the amount of \$30,000 be made from the Church Loan Development Fund to St. John's Lutheran Church, 826 Mahoning Drive West, Lehighton. The terms of loan will be \$30,000 with a seven-year repayment schedule at two percent (2%) interest.

(2022.01.01) *Resolved*, That in accordance with section *C6.05. of the Model Constitution for Congregations, that the decision of St. Michael Lutheran Church, Tilden Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and become a member of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) be approved, effective January 15, 2022.

(2022.01.03) Whereas, The Synod Council of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod adopted a resolution at its regular meeting held on October 16, 2021, concerning St. John Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, that, among other provisions, called upon the bishop to appoint a task force "to prepare a recommendation for Synod Council consideration at its first meeting in the year 2022 concerning Lutheran ministry in Shenandoah, including the possible continuation or closure of St. John's ELC as a congregation and the role to be played by St. John's current pastor";

Whereas, The Final Report, Task Force on Lutheran Ministry in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, December 6, 2021, made five recommendations, including that "the congregation of St. John, Shenandoah, should be closed by Synod Council action at its January 2022 meeting"; and

Whereas, St. John Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, has effectively "ceased to exist as a congregation" (S13.24.) on the basis of St. John's having at most six remaining members, (b) the inability of St. John to elect and populate a congregation council, (c) the failure of St. John to elect officers as required in their constitution, (d) the inability of St. John to pay its bills and in any way financially support its called pastor, and (e) the inability of St. John to protect and maintain its property from gross deterioration;

Resolved, That the Synod Council hereby (a) recognizes and declares St. John Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, to be closed as of January 15, 2022, with the related call of the Rev. Melinda R. Heppe as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, therefore, ending as of this same date, (b) calls upon Bishop Christopher deForest to continue his pastoral and administrative work with Pastor Heppe to assist her in her transition to a new phase of rostered ministry, and (c) affirms the ongoing work of those synod officers and committees already engaged in the work of bringing closure to the business affairs of the congregation, including but not limited to the sale of St. John's property, as called for in the Synod Council's resolution of October 16, 2021, concerning St. John, Shenandoah.

Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network

(2021.07.07) *Resolved*, That Sandra Bodnyk, Paul Emrick, Gary Schmidt, and the Rev. John Richter be re-elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees of the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, 2021-2024.

(2021.10.09) *Resolved*, That Ms. Lori Gustave and Ms. Elsbeth Haymon be elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees of the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, 2021-2024.

(2022.04.12) *Resolved*, That Mr. Michael W. Pessina be elected to a three-year term on the Board of Trustees of the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, 2022-2025.

Mission Districts

No budgets from mission districts were presented to the council for approval.

Synod Organization, Staff, Policies, and Priorities

(2021.07.02). *Resolved*, That the recommendation of the Constitution Committee be accepted that the Synod Council recommend to the 2022 synod assembly that BLS11.01.b. be deleted from the synod's Constitution and Bylaws.

***Resolved*, That BLS11.01.b. be deleted from the synod's Constitution and Bylaws.**

(2021.07.03). *Resolved*, That the recommendation of the Constitution Committee be accepted that the Synod Council recommend to the 2022 synod assembly that the current BLS13.31. be replaced by the following wording for a new BLS13.31.: "The provisions of the ELCA constitution in Chapter 20, 'Consultation, Discipline, Appeals, and Adjudication,' that deal with congregations and members within congregations are incorporated herein by reference."

Resolved, That the current BLS13.31. be replaced by the following wording for a new BLS13.31.: "The provisions of the ELCA constitution in Chapter 20, 'Consultation, Discipline, Appeals, and Adjudication,' that deal with congregations and members within congregations are incorporated herein by reference."

(2021.10.01) *Resolved*, That a new continuing resolution be approved as Chapter II, Number 12: Although the bylaws of the synod refer to "the Synod Council or its Finance Committee" (BLS8.42.b.), indicating that this committee is a committee of the council, the Finance Committee may include additional persons not serving on the Synod Council provided that (a) they are appointed by the Synod Council to a term of one year, which appointment may be renewed to a total of six years of continuous service, and (b) the number of committee members who are not also serving on the Synod Council shall not exceed the number of Synod Council members, including officers specifically assigned or related to the committee, serving on the Finance Committee. The committee's chairperson must always be a member of the Synod Council elected as such by the synod assembly, that is, neither an officer of the synod nor a committee member appointed by the Synod Council.

(2022.04.01) *Resolved*, That to advance the missional theme of Growing Young, the Synod Council establish the position of Growing Young Coordinator, this position to begin within the 2022 fiscal year for a duration of two calendar years, with the understanding that this shall be a twelve-hour-per-week position, and with the understanding that Bishop Christopher deForest shall provide a job description for this position.

(2022.04.02) *Resolved*, That Stacey Burke be hired to serve as Growing Young Coordinator for twelve hours per week at the same rate as applies to her service as Contact and Supply Coordinator, it being understood that the cost for this new position will be approximately \$30,000 per year and with the funds to cover this additional expense coming from the synod's Mission Development Fund.

(2022.04.03) *Resolved*, That to advance the missional theme of Gaining Strength, the Synod Council authorize the establishment of an initial cohort of ten congregations and eleven rostered leaders to be trained in the approach commonly known as the Anchor Church Movement for a period of eighteen months under the direction of Bishop Christopher deForest and the Rev. Dr. D. Michael Bennethum and assisted by consultants identified and secured by those leaders.

(2022.04.04) *Resolved*, That to fund the synod's first Gaining Strength Cohort Training effort, up to \$23,000 over a two-year period beginning in fiscal year 2022 be drawn from the synod's Mission Development Fund.

Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities

(2022.01.11) *Resolved*, That the Common Ground Recovery Community, housed at Atonement Lutheran Church, 5 Wyomissing Blvd, Wyomissing, PA 19610, be reauthorized as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

(2022.04.13) *Resolved*, That Hope's Table, housed at Hope Lutheran Church, 601 N. Front Street, Reading 19601, be reauthorized as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

(2022.04.14) *Resolved*, That Common Ground Recovery Community—Downtown Reading Campus, meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 527 Washington Street, Reading 19601, be

reauthorized as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

**APPENDIX A
2022 SALARIES AND BENEFITS TABLES**

Executive Staff

Name	Base Salary	Housing	SS	Total
deForest	\$72,799	\$25,000	\$8,101	\$105,900
Dietz	\$38,432	\$30,000	\$5,669	\$74,101
Woodfield	\$31,770		\$2,430*	\$31,770
Bennethum	\$7,943			\$7,943
Huber	\$24,607			\$24,607
Grube	\$17,194			\$17,194
Ash-Flashner	\$17,194			\$17,194
Drennan	\$17,194			\$17,194
Shankweiler	\$1,059			\$1,059
Wolfe-Blatt	\$19,062			\$19,062
Gombert	\$25,416		\$1,944*	\$25,416
FY2022 Total	\$272,670		\$4,374*	\$341,440

*Employer required portion of Social Security

Executive Staff Benefits

Name	Cost
deForest	\$28,544
Dietz	\$21,436
Woodfield	\$11,273
Gombert	\$12,963
TOTAL	\$74,217

Total Cost of Executive Staff FY 2022

Salaries	\$341,440
SS	\$4,374
Benefits	\$74,217
TOTAL	\$ 420,032

Contract Staff

Name	Contract Amount
Nielsen	\$19,356
TOTAL	\$19,356

Support Staff

Name	Salary	SS	Benefits	TOTAL
Christman	\$30,986	\$2,370	\$18,548	\$51,905
Burke	\$27,855	\$2,133	\$15,587	\$45,606
Skinner	\$17,955	\$1,373	\$0.00	\$19,328
TOTAL	\$76,826	\$5,877	\$34,136	\$116,839

Support Staff hourly rates

Christman - \$21.18

Burke - \$19.06

Skinner - \$19.06

2022 Cost vs Spending Plan

	Cost	Spending Plan	Difference
Executive	\$420,032	\$399,822	(\$20,210)
Support	\$116,839	\$116,545	(\$294)
Contract	\$19,356	\$30,884	\$11,528
TOTAL	\$556,226	\$547,251	(\$8,975)

MISSION INTERPRETATION MINISTRY

Mission Interpreters share stories and communicate with congregations on how we are using our hands to do God's work. We have started to make in person visits with congregations again to say thank you and help congregations understand how their Mission Support commitments fulfill many ministries. We also are available to make presentations to congregational councils and stewardship committees to bring them ways to use a mission interpreter in their congregation to support their commitments to mission support.

Volunteers, Charlotte Gross and Georgia Suranofsky work together to coordinate the ministry. Charlotte focuses on the East Berks, Lehigh and Northern Lehigh Mission Districts. Dawn Baxter, a Mission Interpreter in West Berks helps coordinate that district. Georgia focuses on the other districts.

We continue to build the Synod team of Mission Interpreters. More information can be found on the Synod website and our facebook page about this ministry. A monthly informational email is sent to the interpreters, Deans and Associates of the Bishop. If you would like to receive the email, please contact Georgia at georgiasuranofsky@hotmail.com.

Our annual "thank you" note to congregations, contained 2 amazing stories about the "We Love" event to build safer and more welcoming congregations for LGBTQIA, youth and families and an Intergeneration Ministry called "Interwoven". Stories will be shared throughout the year using the synods communication platform.

The 5G Network (new name for the Mission Support Table) provides guidance for the Mission Interpreter Ministry year. The 5 G's stand for Growing Grateful Generous Givers Group. Both Charlotte and Georgia are members of the network. We have also started to coordinate our ministry with the help of Debbie Skinner, Mission Support Coordinator for the synod.

We continue to meet virtually with other coordinators throughout the ELCA to share ideas and learn more about the ministries we support. We are planning to meet in person with the other ELCA coordinators in North Carolina in September

Submitted by:

Georgia Suranofsky

Charlotte Gross

Mission Interpretation Coordinators

TREASURER'S REPORT

As we near the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are beginning to feel the effect of serious inflation.

I would like to thank the congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod for their financial support received during the 2021 fiscal year. Our fiscal year begins on February 1 and ends on January 31 of the following year. In the 2021 fiscal year the synod received \$10,637 more in mission support than we budgeted.

The total revenue budgeted for the 2021 fiscal year was \$1,960,400. The actual revenue received was \$1,929,145 resulting in a shortfall of \$31,255. The actual expenditures of \$1,847,946 was \$112,454 less than the budgeted expenditures of \$1,960,400. The 2021 fiscal year ended with a surplus of \$81,199.

In the current fiscal year (2022), we are beginning to feel the impact of inflation. We can examine the impact of inflation over the last six fiscal years and project this impact on our purchasing power for the remainder of the fiscal year as data becomes available. In 2016, the total synod revenue was \$2,800,216. The 2022 budgeted revenue is \$2,061,400. This is \$738,216 lower than the 2016 actual revenue. We can measure the impact of inflation on the 2022 spending plan as of May 2022, by deflating the revenue based on changes in the CPI. The result is that the \$2,061,400 actual revenue is equal to \$1,722,138 in 2016 dollars. If the rapid increase in the rate of inflation continues, the 2022 fiscal year will probably end with a deficit.

The 2023 spending plan will be presented later. The plan was constructed using the following:

REVENUE SOURCES	
Mission Support	93.3%
DEM Grant (ELCA)	0.5%
Event Income	5.8%
Other	0.4%
Total Revenue Sources	100%

EXPENDITURES	
ELCA Support	41.7%
Synod Staff	30.4%
Administration	7.6%
Building & Office	7.4%
Institution & Agency Support	7.1%
Witness & Service Team	4.0%
Ministry Teams	0.7%
Budgetary Reserve*	1.1%
Total Expenditures	100%

* New account for 2023

It has been a pleasure serving as Synod Treasurer and working with the Synod Staff and Finance Committee in doing God's work in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Yours in Christ,
Donald E Boyer, Treasurer

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
2023 Proposed Spending Plan-Final 09APR2022

SPENDING PLAN

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Description</u>	2021 <u>Approved Budget</u>	2021 <u>Unaudited Actual</u>	2022 <u>Approved Budget</u>	2023 <u>Proposed Budget</u>
	Deferred Revenue Available for Appropriations			91,850	100,000
REVENUE					
50100	Interest Earnings	15,000	294	15,000	0
51000	Rental Income	14,400	1,000	2,400	2,400
52000	Events Income	16,000	17,235	24,000	24,000
54000	Mission Support	1,850,000	1,860,637	1,800,000	1,830,000
54700	DEM Support Grant	10,000	10,000	110,000	10,000
55100	Estate Donations	0	134	0	0
59310	Synod Assembly	50,000	39,522	50,000	90,000
59810	Miscellaneous Income	5,000	323	5,000	5,000
	TOTAL REVENUE	1,960,400	1,929,145	2,006,400	1,961,400
	Total Funds Available for Appropriations	1,960,400	1,929,145	2,098,250	2,061,400

EXPENDITURES

WORKSHOPS

62000	Other Workshops	2,000	0	2,000	2,000
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	Total	2,000	0	2,000	2,000
	MISSION SUPPORT				
64100	ELCA Mission Support	869,500	874,499	846,000	47% 860,100
	Total	869,500	874,499	846,000	860,100
	WORSHIP TEAM				
65000	Worship Team	400		400	400
	Total	400	0	400	400
	FAITH FORAMATION RESOURCE TEAM (See Footnote 1)				
65100	Faith Formation Resource Team	200	75	400	2,500
	Total	200	75	400	2,500
	YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT, AND FAMILY TEAM (See Footnote 1)				
65200	Youth Ministry	4,900		4,900	3,700
	Total	4,900	0	4,900	3,700
	RESOURCE CENTER OPERATIONS				
65410	Resource Center Operations	1,000	405	1,000	2,000
	Total	1,000	405	1,000	2,000
	CONNECTION BUILDING TEAM (See Footnote 1)				
65530	Communications/Connections	1,000	761	1,000	1,000
	Total	1,000	761	1,000	1,000
	LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM (See Footnote 1)				
65600	Professional Leadership Grants	3,500		3,500	3,500
	Total	3,500	0	3,500	3,500
	WITNESS & SERVICE TEAM				
66000	Witness and Service Teams	54,000		0	0
66015	Witness Service Operations	0	60	200	200
66120	Gay & Lesbian Ministry TF	0		100	100
66130	Accessibility Team	0		100	100
66140	World Hunger Advocates	0		100	100
	Green Team	0		100	100

66150	Witness & Service Grants	0	7,191	9,150	9,150
66160	Support Intern & Other Leaders	0	2,781	5,500	5,500
66310	New Initiatives	0		17,000	17,000
66430	Common Ground	17,000	18,000	17,000	17,000
66440	Hope's Table	12,000	11,000	12,000	12,000
66800	Campus Ministry	0		20,000	20,000
67110	Leisure Ministry		1,500	1,500	1,500
67310	Global Mission			250	250
	Total	83,000	40,532	83,000	83,000

TEAM TOTALS

94,000	41,773	94,200	96,100
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INSTITUTION & AGENCY SUPPORT

67500	INSTITUTION SUPPORT	0		0	0
67515	Diakon	5,550	5,582	5,400	0.3% 5,490
67525	Lutheran Congregational Services	5,550	5,582	5,400	0.3% 5,490
67535	Good Shepherd	5,550	5,582	5,400	0.3% 5,490
	Total	16,650	16,746	16,200	16,470

AGENCY SUPPORT

67500	AGENCY SUPPORT				
67505	Social Ministry Institution Grants	3,000		0	0.0% 0
67510	United Seminary	92,500	93,032	90,000	5.0% 91,500
67520	Bear Creek Camp	25,900	26,049	25,200	1.4% 25,620
67540	Muhlenberg College	5,550	5,582	5,400	0.3% 5,490
67550	PA Conference of Churches	3,700	3,721	3,600	0.2% 3,660
67560	LAMPA	3,700	3,721	3,600	0.2% 3,660
	Total	134,350	132,105	127,800	8.0% 129,930

TOTAL SUPPORT

151,000	148,851	144,000	146,400
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

68110	Candidacy	15,000	6,744	15,000	15,000
68200	Archives	8,000	8,000	6,000	6,000
	Total	23,000	14,744	21,000	21,000

ADMINISTRATION

BISHOP'S OFFICE

69110	Bishops Discretionary Fund	1,500	509	1,500	1,500
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69120	Consultations-Cong/Professional Ldrs.	2,000		2,000	2,000
69130	Interim Ministry	500		500	500
69160	Bishop Conference	23,000	22,068	23,000	23,000
69170	Ecumenism	100		100	100
69180	Stewardship	2,600	800	2,600	2,800
69195	Assignment Travel Pool	1,500		1,500	1,500
69190	Miscellaneous Expenses	1,500	14	1,500	1,500
69199	Installation		5,206		
	Total	32,700	28,597	32,700	32,900
ADMINISTRATION					
69200	Administrator Office Expenses	1,000		1,000	1,000
69310	Assembly Expenses	50,000	36,369	50,000	100,000
69320	Retired Pastors Event		5,332		
69410	Synod Council Expenses	200		200	200
69430	Legal Services	2,000		2,000	2,000
	Total	53,200	41,701	53,200	103,200
SYNOD STAFF					
69450	Contract Services	35,000	23,278	30,884	20,000
69500	Executive Staff	360,000	399,837	399,822	442,000
69560	Travel - Executive Staff	30,000	15,292	30,600	30,600
69600	Support Staff	141,200	115,446	116,545	132,500
69660	Travel - Support Staff	3,000	240	1,500	1,500
	DEM 2021	0		110,000	
	Total	569,200	554,093	689,351	626,600
BUILDING AND OFFICE					
69700	Building Expenses/Occupancy	81,300	66,261	81,300	81,300
69800	Office Expenses	40,000	36,075	40,000	40,000
69910	Computer Expenses	6,500	17,444	6,500	6,500
69920	Auditors	25,000	23,735	25,000	25,000
69930	Major Capital Improvements/Maintenance	12,500		12,500	0
6999	Miscellaneous Expenses	500	174	500	500
	Total	165,800	143,689	165,800	153,300
	ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL	820,900	768,080	941,051	916,000

70100	BUDGETARY RESERVE				19,800
	TOTAL PROPOSED SPENDING PLAN	1,960,400	1,847,946	2,048,251	2,061,400
	TOTAL INCOME MINUS TOTAL EXPENSES	0	81,199	49,999	0

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF DEANS

The Committee of Deans met frequently since the last synod assembly. Consideration of the ever-evolving situation around COVID-19 was a frequent topic of conversation. They also often discussed the Bishop's three lane vision for the Synod—Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life.

At its July 2021 meeting, Bishop deForest welcomed newly elected Deans Colleen Cox and Deborah Taylor. The deans began work on the 50th Anniversary recognition event for 2020 and 2021 honorees, originally scheduled for Muhlenberg College. The deans took ownership of conducting rostered ministers exit interviews and were invited to attend the “brain trust” event at Christ, Conyngham in August 2021.

In September, the deans moved the anniversary recognition event to the Lutheran Center on October 5, 2021. Beforehand Sammy Kelly and Dean Dan Brettell interviewed the honorees and compiled a corporate video as well as individual videos for each honoree. The deans also welcomed Barb Debski from Portico to introduce us to new, enhanced services from Portico.

In January 22, Linda Bonfiglio began her service as Interim Dean of the Schuylkill Mission District, followed by MaryAnn Hamm of East Berks. Bishop deForest heard from the deans their concerns and challenges. Congregations are encouraged to send in their Mission Support Intent. The deans also had a robust discussion around revamping sabbatical expectations, in order to make them executable by a wider swath of congregations. They formed a smaller working group.

In March, the deans endorsed the work done by the sabbatical working group and made plans to garner input from Synod Council. Bishop deForest made the deans aware of upcoming in-person boundary training.

The deans plan to meet on the 2nd Wednesday every other month on Zoom. At each meeting, they also handle routine roster matters and recognitions.

Anniversaries of Rostered Service

2022 marks the 15th anniversary of service for:

Deacon Pamela R Bonina
Deacon Kelly L Brooks
Deacon Linda S Zawaski
Rev. David L Brown

Rev. R Zachary Labagh
Rev. Michael J Scholtes
Rev. Suzanne Marie Trump
Rev. Joseph Andrew Veres

The following leaders are celebrating 25 years of service:

Rev. John P Hassler
Rev. Carol B Kehler
Rev. Cynthia S Kennett
Rev. P Wes Poole

Observing their 40th anniversary of ordination are:

Deacon Terry A Lieb
Deacon Nancy G Steltz
Rev. Michael A Frost
Rev. Peter D Kuritz
Rev. Wayne T Lupole
Rev. Carey L Miller
Rev. Niels H Nielsen
Rev. Joyce A Seip

Celebrating their 50th anniversary of ordained service are:

Rev. Paul D Braden
Rev. Richard G Gardner
Rev. Denton R Kees
Rev. Donald C Stricker

Marking 55 years of rostered ministry are:

Rev. Edward W Cloughen
Rev. Sterling R Geiger
Rev. F Peter Muhr
Rev. James W Seifert

Celebrating their 60th anniversary of ordination are:

Deacon Sarah J Byers

Rev. Charles J Charles
Rev. Richard A Miller
Rev. Royal L Olson
Rev. Richard H Stough Sr

Celebrating their 65 years of ordained service are:

Rev. Peter P Grimes Jr.
Rev. David N Kistler
Rev. Durrell J Seip

THE REV. PAUL DAVIS BRADEN, son of Edwin S. and Elizabeth A. (Benkert), was born on February 22, 1945 in Philadelphia. He graduated from Brown University in 1967, Harvard Divinity School in 1970, and Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis in 1971.

Following his ordination by the Eastern District of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on August 6, 1972, he served St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Rochester, NY, until 1976. For 20 years, he owned and operated Braden's Flying Service in Easton, PA. In 1997, he was received onto the roster of the ELCA. He served Salem, Bethlehem, PA, from 1997 to 2012. Following his official retirement in 2012, Pastor Braden served as Director of Communications and in multiple interims across the Synod.

Pastor Braden was married to Margaret Anne (Wellert) in 1966. They are the parents of three children— Elizabeth Rachel, Kathryn Margaret, and Matthew Paul. In 2002, he married Paula C. (Herron).

THE REV. RICHARD GEORGE GARDNER, son of George E. Gardner and Annette (March) Gardner was born on May 12, 1946, in Philadelphia, PA. He graduated from Albright College in 1968 and The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1972.

He was ordained by the Southeastern PA Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 21, 1972 at Augustus Lutheran, Trappe, PA. He served the following calls: Emmanuel Lutheran, Pottstown, PA (1972-1974); Advent Lutheran, Richboro, PA (1974-1982); Grace Lutheran, Allentown, PA (1982-1987); Christ Evangelical Lutheran, Schuylkill Haven, PA (1987-1990); Cedar Lutheran, Cetrionia, PA (1990-2011). Following his retirement, he participated in the ministry of Camp Noah.

Pastor Gardner married Patricia Anne (Schwenk) on May 27, 1967. They are the parents of three daughters—Paulyne Alise, Christa Lorryne, and Lauryn Richelle.

THE REV. DENTON ROGER KEES, son of Thomas R. Kees and Lena L. (Ratassepp) was born on October 15, 1938 in Orland, CA. He graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in 1964 and the New York Theological Seminary in 1971.

He was ordained by the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on June 4, 1972. He served St. John, Easton, PA, as Assistant Pastor from 1972 until 1976. He then served as Pastor St. Paul Lutheran, Fountain Hill, PA from 1976 until 1981. In 1981, he became the Executive Director of the Allentown Area Lutheran Parish until he accepted the call as Director of Ministry for the Lehigh Mission District in 1989 until 1992. In 1992, he began working for the Synod, assisting with the mobility process. In 1993, he began serving St. Peter, Plainfield Township, PA, as interim Pastor and then as called Pastor until retiring in 2003. Following his retirement, he served the Synod extensively in various interim capacities.

Pastor Kees married Gail Lois (Herget) on November 20, 1965. They are the parents of two children—Kathryn Francis and Jeremy David

THE REV. DONALD CHARLES STRICKER, son of Charles Irvin and Laura Agnes (Gehr) Stricker was born on November 7, 1946 in Reading, PA. He graduated from Albright College in 1968 and The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1972.

Pastor Stricker was ordained by the Northeastern PA Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 21, 1972 at Alsace Lutheran Church, Reading, PA.

He served the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Easton, PA as Assistant Pastor from 1972 until 1979. He served Trinity, Gouglersville, PA, from 1979 through 1985. In 1986, Pastor Stricker became Associate Pastor of Trinity Lutheran, Lehighton, PA until 1988. In 1991, he began serving Salem, Audenreid (Hazleton), PA and St. Paul, Beaver Meadows, PA until his retirement in 2013.

Pastor Stricker married Marsha Lee (Schindlbeck) Stricker on June 27, 1970. They are the parents of three children — Michael Brendon, Brian Douglas, and Megan Marie.

The Rev. Rachael C. R. Dietz
Executive Associate of the Bishop for Leadership

DIRECTOR FOR EVANGELICAL MISSION

The Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America deploys a Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) in each of its 65 synods. Among other duties, DEMs explore opportunities for new mission development on the synod territory and work with existing congregations to help them invite new people into the way of Jesus, particularly those who are younger and more diverse than our current membership. I have served as this synod's DEM since the position was created in 2009.

New ministries currently under development in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod include the Common Ground Recovery Community (an outreach to those in 12-step recovery programs, currently with two campuses – one urban and one suburban), Hope's Table (a ministry with those experiencing economic poverty), and Café Esperanza (a pay-what-you-can café designed to build relationships among people of diverse economic and demographic backgrounds). As DEM, I work with the synod's Witness and Service Ministry Team to support other new ministry initiatives as they arise. Some are short-term explorations, such as work we did for a season deploying a seminary intern to ascertain the potential for an ELCA ministry in Susquehanna County. Others, like Common Ground, become ongoing ministries that continue to grow and expand.

My work with existing congregations aligns with Bishop deForest's "Gaining Strength" emphasis and promotes a number of opportunities for our congregations to become "stronger together." In the past year, I met with leaders from congregations in the Pine Grove area of the Schuylkill Mission district to imagine opportunities for collaborative ministry. Because of the energy and vision of these leaders, an impressive series of cooperative projects have taken place, bringing strength to participating congregations and increasing their collective impact. I am always available to work with clusters of congregations that are looking for ways to do ministry together.

Currently, leaders from 10 of our congregations are working with Pastor Doug Hill of Abiding Hope church in Littleton, Colorado to contextualize for our synod a process the ELCA refers to as "Anchor Church." Anchor churches utilize their strengths – in terms of people, resources, and vision – to support neighboring congregations. Together, participating congregations grow in their own vitality and in their ability to engage with people in their surrounding communities.

Recently, lay and rostered leaders from another 14 of our congregations participated in the ELCA's semi-annual online Congregational Vitality Training, to grow stronger in both their internal health and their outreach ministries. Made possible through

mission support giving, this semi-annual online training is offered free of charge to all who register (congregations are encouraged to have a team of lay leaders participate in the training along with their rostered ministers). Sessions by Zoom are held bi-weekly both in the afternoon and the evening to accommodate the schedules of participants. The next training will take place on October 6 & 20 and November 3 & 17. In the late summer and early fall, the synod's weekly E-News will provide details and a link for registration.

The June 18 "Generosity and Vitality in the Now Normal" conference, which this synod is hosting in partnership with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (synods, too, are stronger together), is another opportunity for congregational leaders to develop their strength for ministry. Two keynote speakers and a host of workshops featuring both local and nationally known individuals will be available in person (at Trinity, Lansdale) and online. The synod's weekly E-News contains more detail and registration information.

Thank you to the members of the Witness and Service Ministry Team, the various teams and task forces that exist under its umbrella (among them the Racial Justice Team, Green Team, Parish Nursing Task Force, and World Hunger Appeal Team), and all the other leaders in this synod whose passion for Jesus and creative ideas for engaging people with the Gospel make my job as DEM fulfilling.

Pastor D. Michael Bennethum
Director for Evangelical Mission

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

Another year of Covid, another year of pivoting how we do things. In many ways, the last year has looked quite a bit like the year before. Meetings and workshops continued on zoom, just so event planning could continue to move forward. We were also aware that all of our planning could be for nothing, depending on what Covid was doing.

Our biggest disappointment during the last 12 months was the decision to cancel Learning Ministry Day 2022. Covid infection numbers were soaring, and many of our planned workshops were hands-on and interactive. Our team did not want our event to become a super-spreader event, so the choice was made to cancel. May we finally be able to have a live event in 2023.

One activity that has continued is our Faith Formation Saturdays. Our classes in 2021 continued to look at the basics of the Lutheran faith. Then, in February 2022, we started a new series on the history of the Christian church, looking at early churches, early leaders, the Reformation and more. We hope to continue these Saturday workshops and are always open to other topics of interest from interested participants. Please don't hesitate to share your ideas with us.

Another big project undertaken this year has been the reorganization of the Synod Resource Center. The materials have now been moved to make them easier to find, and we are now updating the on-line catalog and identifying where all of the resources may be found. Hopefully, all of these upgrades will make the Center more accessible to everyone.

Our team still hopes that we may continue doing congregational visits in the future, offering our help to any congregation who may need it. We will do our best to continue our work even during these extraordinary times.

Cheryl Statham

Convenor

WITNESS AND SERVICE TEAM REPORT

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. -John 14:27

Praise God! The peace that Christ gives is not as the world gives. We might ask ourselves, “Is the world even capable of peace?”

Judging from the daily news, we think not. War and rumors of more war, immigration and refugee crisis after crisis, rising inflation, crime on our streets, and gun violence in our public places... where is the peace?

Yet the Christian message is one of peace and love for all the world. At a fundraiser for an organization that lifts families from homelessness, I encountered a sobering statistic; there are one million children living homeless in America. How can anything we do make a difference? While we can't help one million, we can help one. Start small. Begin with peace.

The Witness and Service Team invites your good ideas! What is your passion for witness and service? How can you impact the one or the many? Will your idea help reach more people with the Good News (Witness) or will it help meet a growing need in your community (Service) or both? A grant application can be found on the Synod website which can provide seed money for your good idea. On the application you will be asked to present your ministry plan, budget, goals, and projected outcomes. A Witness and Services Team grant amount typically does not exceed 1/3 of total project budget and is limited to \$3,000 for a single applicant or \$5,000 for a collaborative project. In our effort to encourage new ideas and emerging ministries, we do not fund the same project for more than three consecutive years. In three years, your new idea has had time to grow and prosper; be communicated to the larger community; earn respect, new friends, new partners, and support. So as your congregation returns to a new normal, we look forward to learning about how you are reimagining ministry—a ministry of love and peace.

The Witness and Service Team is also made up of smaller and more focused subgroups and task forces. Team members are available to reach out to these areas of ministry to learn of successes, challenges, plans, and how we can work together. We invite you to learn more about our team, and its subgroups and task forces online at: The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod » Witness and Service Ministry Team (nepasynod.org)

Respectfully submitted, Linda Maxon, convenor

PARISH NURSING TASKFORCE

An NEPA Synod Parish Nursing Taskforce has been formed to develop a network for registered nurses who are currently serving in their congregations as parish nurses, or who are interested in starting or expanding a parish nurse program, as well as registered nurse not currently serving as parish nurses, but who are interested in becoming parish nurses. The Taskforce is also seeking to raise awareness in congregations of the value of offering parish nurse programs which promote the health and wellness of its members, as well as is a means of evangelism that benefits those in the greater community.

Members of the taskforce are:

Dean Black, R.N., Parish Nurse at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Emmaus, PA.

Nancy Hess, R.N., Parish Nurse at Friedens Lutheran Church, Oley, PA

Gail Ide, BSN, R.N., HTP, CCP, REIKI Master, Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, Dallas, PA.

Debra Obeid, R.N, Salem- Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Kresgeville, PA

Reverend Mary Owens, R.N, Saint Matthew's United Evangelical Lutheran Church, Scranton, PA.

(Serving as volunteer Coordinator of Taskforce/Network and NEPA division of Region 7 and 8

Parish Nurses)

Tammy Oswald, BSN, RN, PCCN, FCN, Parish Nurse, Friedens Lutheran Church, Oley, PA.

Enid Rank, R.N., Faith Community Nurse, at Christ Lutheran Church, Hellertown, PA.

Peggy Saylor, MSN, R.N., Parish Nurse, at Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Breinigsville, PA.

Registered nurses on the taskforce are currently serving in formal and informal roles as parish nurses within their congregations, as paid members of staff or volunteers. Among their responsibilities include:

- Assessing Health/Wellness needs of members, and others in the greater community, and developing initiatives to help a congregation respond to those needs proactively.
- Nurse advocacy for hospitalized or homebound members, and those residing in nursing facilities
- Visitation to the hospitalized and homebound including providing Holy Communion.
- Wellness initiatives including coordinating community blood drives, Covid vaccinations, Blood pressure screening, etc.
- Food pantry collection, distribution and assistance with community meals, and efforts to address food insecurity.
- Outreach and support to the elderly, impoverished and homeless.
- Education regarding prevention of and managing chronic disease such as hypertension, diabetes, etc.
- Support of members on hospice, including spiritual support when actively dying, and support of caregivers coping with caring for loved ones on hospice.
- Support for those experiencing alcohol addiction and substance abuse, and their families. Smoking cessation classes.
- Rapid response and assistance to manage medical emergencies and injuries during worship services and events
- Transportation to/from medical appointments
- Provide information about medical care resources available in community, including obtaining low-cost medications
- Collection of medical supplies for Ukraine

The members of the NEPA Parish Nursing Taskforce are working to develop an NEPA Synod-wide network of Registered Nurses, currently serving as parish nurses in congregations, or who have a desire to do so. The Taskforce is working with the

Evangelical Lutheran Parish Nurse Association (ELPNA) to form one regional peer group of parish nurses, which includes Region 8 Parish Nurses from the following synods: Northwestern PA, Southwestern PA, Allegheny PA, Lower Susquehanna PA, Upper Susquehanna PA, Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington DC and West-Virginia-Western Maryland. Advantages of belonging to the Region 7 and Region 8 Parish Nurse peer group include the opportunity to take part in a monthly zoom meeting, which offers both spiritual and professional support, as nurses share challenges experienced in their parish nurse settings, and other nurses offer feedback about how these situations may be positively resolved. Additionally, in these zoom calls, information is shared about developing policies and procedures for parish nurse programs, based upon the best clinical standards for providing excellent nursing care. Opportunities for continuing education are presented, as well as upcoming workshops and events. ELPNA encourages nurses to take a foundational course for Faith Community Nursing, and awards scholarships to cover the cost of the course. Grants are also available through ELPNA for registered nurses interested in developing parish nurse programs in their congregations.

For more information about parish nursing opportunities or programs, please contact Reverend Mary Owens R.N. at maryowens903@yahoo.com.

NEPA COACH NETWORK

Are you the kind of person who likes accompany another person cheering them on as they strive to fulfill a goal? Then you may very well be a potential candidate for becoming part of our NEPA Coach Team. We are a small team connected to a growing network of coaches trained using the resources of the ELCA and partnerships with professional coach training programs. Coaches receive both general instruction using ICF (International Coach Federation) core competencies and standards of ethics along with more specific training in the areas of Faith Formation, Stewardship, Congregational Vitality/Redevelopment, Mission starts and Care of Creation.

Our role is to accompany rostered and lay leaders as well as ministry teams and boards using a process that supports them in identifying stumbling blocks in their ministries and then, developing goals and action plans that help to effectively deal with these challenges and move forward. We journey with our clients through the creation of realistic options and measureable action steps lifting up progress, both big and small, along the way.

Our Bishop and staff have enthusiastically embraced the value of coaching and are working with us to make this ministry as prosperous and effective as possible. As the Bishop and staff roll out the process for achieving the synod's Vitality Goals we will be used as a significant resource in helping to make this happen. We humbly ask your prayers for this ministry that it may be a blessing to our Bishop, synod staff, and rostered and lay leaders throughout the NEPA Synod.

If you want to know more about becoming a coach or about establishing a relationship with a coach as a leader or ministry group please contact me using the phone number or email listed below. Thanks!

Submitted by:

Pr. Tom Lang

NEPA Coach Coordinator

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Fleetwood, PA

610.944.8388 (church) pastor@spelcfleetwood.com

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY TEAM

The Leadership Development Ministry Team centers on the following priorities: to identify candidates for and encourage lay and rostered leaders in the church, to develop and grow their gifts for ministry and to support them siblings in Christ. The team maintains and reviews the salary and compensation guidelines found in the bulletin of reports. The Leadership Development Team provides the home for First Call Theological Education, an intentional ELCA effort to support, engage, and empower rostered leaders in their first three years of ministry. Currently, our NEPA Synod is the beneficiary of 6 First Call Leaders and their gifts.

Cultivating a culture of adaptive leadership takes time, energy, effort, and lots and lots of practice! Thank YOU for the ways you embraced change so that our communities experience the grace of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit. Strong congregations work alongside strong deacons and pastors. Deacons and pastors who love their ministry and feel fulfilled in their call encourage others to wonder, "Could I do that? I could do that!" The cycle continues, and every part is interconnected and interdependent.

Consider joining our team as we grow stronger together.

Submitted by Rev. Rachael Dietz, convener

2023 MINIMUM COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines represent a 6% increase over 2022.

ROSTERED PASTORS 2023 Minimum Salary Guidelines

Resolved that:

1) The 2023 *minimum* base salary for Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors) in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:

Years completed Service in ordained Ministry	2023 Recommended Salary Range (including housing allowance)		2023 Recommended Salary Range (parsonage provided)	
	Low	High	Low	High
0-1	59,036	64,961	41,030	45,134
2-3	60,342	65,878	42,337	46,579
4-7	61,650	67,816	43,650	48,012
8-10	64,230	70,692	46,274	50,891
11-15	66,230	79,476	48,226	53,048
16-20	69,500	83,399	50,487	60,585
21+	72,771	94,603	54,768	71,198

2) It is the responsibility of each congregation to provide housing for its pastor(s). This may be accomplished in either of two ways:

a) Housing Allowance. A portion of the pastor’s salary may be designated as a housing allowance. This amount will vary, depending upon location and the needs of the pastor. Congregations and pastors should check current tax laws in establishing this figure. This amount should be established before the beginning of each year by a resolution of the Congregation Council or the listing of an amount in the congregation’s budget.

b) Parsonage. This is free use of a church-owned house, including utilities. A portion of the pastor’s base salary may be set aside for furnishings and other housing expenses according to the IRS code. An annual equity allowance of a minimum of 3%-5% of salary is recommended for all parsonage situations.

3) Congregations should remember that the figures in the grid are *minimums*. Congregations are encouraged to exceed these minimum guidelines. Additional compensation should be provided based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.

4) Each congregation shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to facilitate the discussion by which these criteria are evaluated (as well as for carrying out the other functions of mutual ministry).

5) A congregation that fails to meet the synodical guidelines shall submit a report to the bishop on a form to be provided, detailing the reasons why these minimums are not being met and the steps that will be taken to establish these minimums as soon as possible.

The following minimum benefits should be provided in addition to salary:

1) A **Social Security Allowance** equal to one half of the pastor's social security liability. This allowance is taxable for income tax purposes. For 2023, the Social Security liability is expected to be equal to 15.3% of the combined base salary and housing provision. (Parsonages are subject to this tax at their fair rental value.)

2) An **Automobile Allowance** equal to IRS guidelines per mile for business travel. Pastors reimbursed for auto expense on a per mile basis do not have to report this allowance as income if they submit written mileage reports to the calling institution.

3) **Continuing Education** provisions including a congregation/agency providing at least \$550 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time with Sundays (not vacation), and the pastor providing at least \$250. Programs that include Sundays need to be negotiated with the congregation council. It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and pastors work towards a partnership goal of \$1,000.

4) Four full weeks of **vacation** time annually.

5) On the occasion of birth or adoption, Congregations shall provide 6-12 weeks of **parental leave** depending on the needs of the parent and family with full pay and benefits.

6) One to two **days off** per week, and, at least once a month, two consecutive days off.

7) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, pastors are considered to be employees of the congregation and therefore should be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.

8 **Health and pension benefits** according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision *shall be provided for by the congregation or calling agency.* The Leadership Development Team of the NEPA Synod supports the recommendation of ELCA Church Council, and urges all synod congregations to offer the Gold + option (or its equivalent) for rostered ministers and church workers each year, unless the Silver+ option provides more savings *for the member.*

9) Congregations may also reimburse the pastor(s) for **professional expenses** such as dues, entertainment, supplies, and malpractice insurance.

PASTORS WITH PART TIME CALLS

Pastors with part time calls should be compensated on a prorated basis in line with the above guidelines, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop. Vacation and continuing education provisions should be prorated, as well. Pension and health benefits are according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.

**ROSTERED DEACONS
2023 Minimum Salary Guidelines**

Resolved that:

1) The 2023 *minimum* salary for Rostered Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons) in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:

Years completed Service in rostered ministry	2023		2023	
	Recommended Salary Range With Bachelor’s Degree		Recommended Salary Range With Master’s Degree	
	Low	High	Low	High
0-1	40,185	44,273	42,771	47,047
2-3	41,658	45,822	45,471	50,017
4-7	43,066	47,372	46,879	51,566
8-10	45,883	50,471	49,694	54,664
11-15	47,995	57,592	51,809	62,169
16-20	51,515	61,189	55,329	66,394
21+	55,036	71,550	58,851	76,506

2) Congregations should remember that the figures in the grid are *minimums*. Congregations are encouraged to exceed these minimum guidelines. Additional compensation should be provided based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.

3) Each congregation shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to facilitate the discussion by which these criteria are evaluated (as well as for carrying out the other functions of mutual ministry).

4) A congregation that fails to meet the synodical guidelines shall submit a report to the bishop on a form to be provided, detailing the reasons why these minimums are not being met and the steps that will be taken to establish these minimums as soon as possible.

The following *minimum* benefits should be provided in addition to salary:

1) An **Automobile Allowance** equal to IRS guidelines per mile for business travel. Rostered ministers reimbursed for auto expense on a per mile basis do not have to report this allowance as income if they submit written mileage to the calling institution.

- 2) **Continuing Education** provisions including a congregation/agency providing at least \$550 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time with Sundays (not vacation), and the deacon providing at least \$250. Programs that include Sundays need to be negotiated with the congregation council. It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and pastors work towards a partnership goal of \$1,000.
- 3) Four full weeks of **vacation** time annually.
- 4) One to two **days off** per week, and, at least once a month, two consecutive days off.
- 5) On the occasion of birth or adoption, Congregations shall provide 6-12 weeks of **parental leave** depending on the needs of the parent and family with full pay and benefits.
- 6) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, deacons are considered to be employees of the congregation and therefore should be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.
- 8 **Health and pension benefits** according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision *shall be provided for by the congregation or calling agency.* The Leadership Development Team of the NEPA Synod supports the recommendation of ELCA Church Council, and urges all synod congregations to offer the Gold + option (or its equivalent) for rostered ministers and church workers each year, unless the Silver+ option provides more savings *for the member*.
- 8) Congregations may also reimburse the deacon(s) for **professional expenses** such as dues, entertainment, supplies, and malpractice insurance.

RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM

In May 2021, a group of concerned and creative leaders organized Trouble the Water, an on-line event designed to help educate people to recognize the racism inherent in our culture and synod, and to inspire us all to take further steps to work towards a more just and society.

As a result of that event, the Synod Racial Justice Team (RJT) was formed. Under the umbrella of Witness and Service, this group has met several times over the past year, praying and dreaming about how we can join God in this work.

Visioning for our work together, we discerned that the purpose of this group at this time is

- to offer education, resources, and support for leaders and congregations

- to serve as a catalyst to help the NEPA Synod work towards racial justice
- to amplify the voices, images, and work of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

What we have done so far:

The RJT has researched resources available through the ELCA, other synods, and our ecumenical partners, and shared a number of these to the website for all to use. This will be an ongoing project, so please check the site monthly:
nepasynod.org/antiracismresources/.

RJT members facilitated a Lenten discussion and prayer group focused on the book *Waking Up White* by Debby Irwin. Participants from across the synod (and some from other synods) joined via Zoom.

The RJT created a resolution to be brought to the 2022 Synod Assembly, the goal of which is to ensure that all Rostered Leaders and SALMS are able to access racial justice training.

The RJT will continue to evaluate and offer resources on the synod website, as well as hold online and hopefully in person events.

If this is a ministry that interests you, please contact any of the members of our team: Kaitlyn Blend, Colleen Cox, Samantha Drennan, Deborah Graf (co-convenor), Brandon Heavner, Jennifer Hall, Suzanne Trump (co-convenor), Mike Bennethum (staff liaison).

A-TEAM (DIFFERENT ABILITY RESOURCE TEAM)

The "A Team" mission is to "...encourage and assist congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to open their hearts, minds, and doors to all of God's people by removing barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude that exclude any person from full and active participation in the life of Christ's Church." The Team typically meets several times throughout the year. The pandemic has limited meetings.

Please watch for information and ideas to use October 9th, Synod Disability Awareness Sunday. The A-Team continues to work on redesigning its web page in the Synod website: www.godslove.org. "Accessibility Basics" is a resource on 'different Abilities' inclusion and ministry available for congregational leaders. The team is apprised of churchwide Disability Ministry and its work with Grant Proposals, Faith Formation and Localized Active Ministries committees.

The A-Team members are: Rev. Allen Forsman, Rev. Timothy Garman, Rev. David Kistler (Secretary), and Jean Sandberg (Convener). We recognize Barbara and Richard Hartman, Members Emeritus. We remember with gratitude Rev. William Horn, Ms. Mary Smith and Ms. Carolyn Volk. We give thanks to God for their insight, leadership and years of service to disability ministry in the Synod. The team is seeking new members who have a passion for inclusive ministry.

A-Team members are available as a resource to provide support and to offer presentations and discussions for various age groups. Contact Jean Sandberg via e-mail at jdsandberg@hotmail.com with inquiries or for interest in volunteering on the A-Team.

Jean Sandberg, Convener

CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

Rev. Jennifer Heavner, Chair

Greetings and blessings to you from the NEPA Candidacy Committee of the ELCA. My name is Pastor Jennifer Heavner—I'm honored to serve as the chairperson of your Candidacy Team alongside Pastor Rachael Dietz, the Executive Associate to the Bishop for Leadership.

The Candidacy Team is a group of lay leaders, pastors, and deacons from throughout our Synod territory charged with the task of shepherding candidates for the rosters of Word and Service and Word and Sacrament through the candidacy process. This process begins with a person feeling a sense that God just might be calling them to serve Jesus' Church as a deacon or pastor. From discernment conversations, initial interviews, and lots of paperwork, to selecting and entrance into seminary...to the excitement of chaplaincy rotations, internship, and final approval, our team is committed to accompanying and supporting our candidates through the joys and rigors of their journey to answer God's call to rostered leadership in the ELCA.

This year we've joyfully approved Luke Swanson for ordination to the roster of Word and Sacrament. We currently have fourteen candidates for both rosters at varying stages of the candidacy process. We ask that you and your worshiping communities hold them in prayer.

And, we have another important, holy task for you, our siblings in Christ in NEPA—to discern! Discernment is the process of prayerfully looking for the sparks of the Holy Spirit on the move in our world and asking for the wisdom to know where the Spirit is leading. As Jesus' disciples, we're all called to discern.

Your candidacy team invites you help discern people who just might have the gifts for leadership as a deacon or pastor. Do you know someone in whom you see the gifts for ordained leadership? Well, tell them and invite them into a conversation with your church pastor or deacon about it. Have you felt the pull of the Spirit at some point in your own life saying "you know, I feel (or have felt) called to ordained ministry." If so, no matter where you are in life's journey, your

candidacy team stands ready to talk with you about the possibilities and different avenues towards answering that call.

Pastor Rachael and I would be delighted to speak with and pray alongside any of you who feel they may be discerning a call to the holy work of ordained leadership. We'd be honored to discern with you.

Your Candidacy Team is excited to assure you that God is indeed doing new and exciting things through the dynamic future rostered leaders in NEPA Synod, ELCA. We pray you are blessed through your time here at Synod Assembly.

SYNOD GREEN TEAM REPORT (2021-2022)

The synod's Green Team – formerly the Creation Care Task Force – has been moving in a positive direction over the last year. We resumed regular meetings over Zoom, given that most folks are now comfortable with a remote platform nowadays, and appreciate that this is both convenient and saves a good deal of time and energy use.

One of our initiatives is the production of a seasonal e-newsletter. The first edition, which came out in the Spring of 2022, included environmental tips, creation-focused prayers, an introduction to a local natural site, book reviews, and an inspirational story from a congregation within the synod. Future editions will have similar content; all editions will be available on the synod's website at <https://nepasynod.org/green-team/>.

Another goal for the team is to have at least one in-person event annually; the plan for 2022 is a gathering at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. These events will focus on the many beautiful and important places within the synod, and hope to connect people with the land that we live and minister in.

Future project for the Green Team may include the planting of a native garden on the grounds of the Lutheran Center, a presence at educational events and synod assemblies, and possible assistance with energy audits and grant requests for congregations. If you would be interested in becoming part of a team or would like assistance with creation care efforts in your congregation, please feel free to attend one of our Zoom meetings (advertised in the synod's weekly e-news), or contact us through the website, above. Thanks!

Submitted by Paul Metzloff



BEAR CREEK CAMP

Explore, celebrate & grow in God's creation!

Greetings from Bear Creek Camp, the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry for the Northeastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA.

Thank you Northeastern PA Synod and congregations for your ongoing support of the ministry at Bear Creek Camp. We are grateful to work in partnership with each of you and to be an extension of your ministries. We were thrilled to be included with MinLab last August and look forward to the many innovative ways that we will fruitfully minister together in the future.

In the Summer of 2021, we were excited to be able to return to residential camp ministry for youth and families. We made many adjustments across all aspects of our programs to care for the health and safety of our community. In doing so, we rediscovered the value of small group programming, we reemphasized the role of our young adult summer staff as facilitators and mentors, we reinvented new ways to carry out the community building that makes time apart at camp so meaningful. With intentionally reduced cabin capacities, we were able to welcome 654 youth and family campers to camp with nearly 40% of those campers experiencing camp for the first time. We had our largest year ever for serving our local community through our Nature Day Camp Programs with 208 participants throughout the summer. 41 young adult leaders followed the call to serve as camp staff and experienced what it means to live in and create intentional Christian community.

Your financial and prayerful support of Bear Creek Camp as a synod and as individual congregations is vital to our success, especially in a year of such greatly reduced revenue. Your investment is just that – an investment. Research shows that youth that attend a Christian camp, experience measurable change in their commitment to personal faith, their desire to participate in faith practices in their home, and their sense that being a part of a faith community like a church is important to their life. These self-described changes aren't just being felt the week after a camper comes home from camp, but continue six months after a camp experience. We are building up young people and leaders to be active members of our synod's congregations to strengthen the church and the world. Thank you for joining us in this mission.

Throughout the year, we host groups and events including youth and confirmation retreats, men’s and women’s retreats, work groups, school field trips, disaster relief trainings, family reunions, and more. The amount of lives that are positively impacted directly and indirectly through a Bear Creek Camp experience is overwhelming!

When I think of each of the people and families behind the numbers above, I think of the good that is happening in the world because of them. Bear Creek Camp is an amplifier—an opportunity to expand and grow upon the work of the congregation and the family in making a positive difference at a time when that is needed more than ever.

Please continue to pray for Bear Creek Camp as together we explore, celebrate and grow in God’s creation.

Respectfully submitted,
Collin Grooms- Executive Director

GOOD SHEPHERD REHABILITATION NETWORK

March 2021 to February 2022

Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network is a broadly recognized, not-for-profit rehabilitation leader committed to transforming lives through expertise, innovation and compassion. Good Shepherd provides an exceptional patient experience for people of all ages and stages by developing leading-edge solutions, often for complex medical situations; serving as a test site for the newest rehabilitation technologies; and inspiring hope in all we do.

Headquartered in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Good Shepherd traces its pioneering spirit for innovation and compassionate care to its founding family, The Rev. John “Papa” Raker and D. Estella “Mama” Raker. In 1908, the Rakers opened the Good Shepherd Home to care for children with disabilities and senior citizens, filling an unmet community need — and setting the stage for Good Shepherd’s continued growth as a rehabilitation groundbreaker.

Good Shepherd also partners with Penn Medicine to provide rehabilitation and specialty services in the greater Philadelphia area and New Jersey through a joint venture called Good Shepherd Penn Partners (GSPP).

Significant 2021-22 accomplishments included:

· In September 2021, Good Shepherd broke ground in Center Valley, Pennsylvania, on a state-of-the-art, 76-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital that will revolutionize treatment and recovery options for people with complex medical conditions, such as stroke, spinal cord injury, brain injury and other serious injuries or illnesses. Nationally, only a handful of new rehabilitation hospitals are built each year. Expected to open in 2023, the new hospital will feature the Experience Center, a first-of-its-kind space that gives people with disabilities and other mobility challenges an environment to explore the latest advancements in 3D printing, robotics, wearables, artificial intelligence and smart home and personal assistance devices to promote healing and independence and make people's lives better.

· Newsweek magazine named Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown as one of the nation's "Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers 2021." Good Shepherd ranked fifth overall in Pennsylvania, and the best in the Lehigh Valley. Newsweek also named the Penn Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine among the nation's "Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers 2021." Staffed by GSPP employees, the Penn Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine ranked fourth overall in Pennsylvania for inpatient rehabilitation.

· Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network added three leaders to its senior leadership team. Astrid Gonzalez Parrilla, OTD, MBA, FACHE, is Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations, overseeing adult and pediatric inpatient rehabilitation hospitals, long-term acute care, home health, long-term care and admissions. Jeanne Dzurenko, MPH, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, is Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer, overseeing nursing, patient safety, respiratory therapy, pharmacy, infection prevention, quality and regulatory compliance,

education, wound care, staffing and float pool. Karen Long, BS, PTA, is Vice President of Operations for Outpatient Therapy, overseeing outpatient operations, MS Wellness Program and Good Shepherd's outpatient contracts with regional assisted living facilities.

· Good Shepherd Pediatrics acquired additional sizes of the Trexo Plus robotic gait training technology that helps children from age one to their late teens relearn how to walk or perhaps even walk for the first time in their lives. With six total devices, Good Shepherd is the only pediatric rehabilitation provider in the United States to offer all three sizes (small, medium and large) for both inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation settings. To view the technology in action, visit GoodShepherdRehab.org/technology/trexo-plus.

· Amid a pandemic, Good Shepherd Home – Bethlehem and Good Shepherd Home - Raker Center in Allentown both received successful, deficiency-free surveys from the

Pennsylvania Department of Health. It was Good Shepherd Home – Bethlehem’s fifth straight year of deficiency-free surveys.

· The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) re-accredited Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown, as well as its inpatient Pediatric Unit in Bethlehem, for a period of three years for six total inpatient rehabilitation programs. Additionally, CARF reaccredited the Penn Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine for three years for five total inpatient rehabilitation programs. CARF accreditation is the gold standard for rehabilitation providers.

Your continued support allows Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network to further our mission of compassion and recovery and to honor the legacy of our founders, the Raker family. On behalf of every Good Shepherd Trustee and Associate, thank you.

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

Greetings to the Members of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod,

I share below a list of activities and events of Muhlenberg College, one of the 26 ELCA affiliated colleges and a partner in ministry with the NEPA Synod. I give thanks for the work of the synod and look forward to growing in partnership during my time at Muhlenberg. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at janelle Neubauer@muhlenberg.edu.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Janelle Neubauer, Chaplain

Muhlenberg College – NEPA Synod Assembly Report of Activities from March 2021-March 2022

- As part of continued efforts to support students’ mental and emotional well-being, Muhlenberg began a partnership with The Jed Foundation (JED) and its JED Campus Initiative. This strategic four-year collaboration will focus on increasing accessibility and opportunity for students to access resources to support their mental and emotional health needs. JED helps to partner especially through the lens of cultural competence, equity and inclusion in mental health education and care.

- A successful virtual Baccalaureate service was led by Chaplain Claire Burkat and the College returned to an in-person graduation at the PPL Center for Class of 2021.

- With gratitude for Rev. Claire Burkat who faithfully served as the interim chaplain through June of 2021, we welcomed Rev. Janelle Neubauer to serve as college chaplain. Janelle began her service in mid-July.

- We returned to in-person classes and fulltime campus activity for the Fall of 2021, requiring all students, faculty, and staff to be vaccinated or to receive exemption. This led us to a 98% vaccination rate as a campus community.
- Continued monitoring of COVID allowed for the return of usual activity during the semester with mindfulness around distancing and masking. This included but was not limited to religious services, sports games, theater and music performances, and in-person family, alumni, and Class of 2020 weekends (with all visitors to campus fully vaccinated). We also returned to hosting our Candlelight Carols Advent Services in-person at Egner Memorial Chapel (3 services at reduced capacity) and offered livestream viewing as well as a produced version for later viewing. Hybrid events (events offering both in-person and virtual options) became more common in order to accommodate varying levels of availability and comfort.
- To continue to prioritize all-around well-being, the College offered special events for students, faculty, and staff to attend to mental and emotional health during the challenges of reorienting to full-time campus life in the midst of the continued pandemic. These efforts included offering a day to “Restore and Reconnect.” Students and faculty were given a day off of class and offered community building activities and opportunities for individual restoration during a period of noticeable campus fatigue.
- Muhlenberg welcomed many beloved supporters and community members to campus for the successful inauguration of President Kathleen Haring, the thirteenth president of the College and the first woman president. President Haring is a decades long member of the Muhlenberg faculty and has served in the capacity of professor, Provost and interim President prior to her appointment. President Haring is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, PA.
- During the inauguration weekend, Muhlenberg also publicly launched the Boundless Campaign having already raised \$71 million of the \$111 million campaign goal. As of March 2022 we have reached \$77 million.
- Building of the new Parkway Boulevard building is underway, a new facility that will house the the Innovation and Entrepreneurship program, the Muhlenberg Institute of Public Opinion, the Office of Community Engagement and the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education.
- The President’s Diversity Advisory Council, led by the Associate Provost for Faculty and Diversity, produced the first annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report (linked [here](#)). The report outlines work completed across the College to support and advance DEI initiatives in 2020-2021.
- The spring semester began in the midst of the Omicron surge and with careful consideration and consultation with health professionals we moved forward with in-person classes and student activities with additional safety measures.
- Muhlenberg announced the promotion of 11 faculty to tenured associate professor positions - you can find more information about each promoted faculty [here](#).

- After two years of limited access to campus for prospective students, Muhlenberg welcomed back admitted students and their families for a successful Through the Red Doors weekend on campus.

- Muhlenberg continues to adjust policies and safety measures regarding the COVID-19 pandemic at the recommendation of medical professionals, in consultation with our local health network partners, and with both campus and local data on hand. At this point in time, we expect to have an in-person Honors Convocation as well as a completely in-person senior week that will include a student-focused Baccalaureate service, a family day on campus, and graduation at the PPL Center in Allentown.

PORTICO

Benefit Stability in Uncertain Times



As the pandemic ebbed and flowed in 2021, Portico's benefits remained a reliable constant for ELCA congregations and organizations, affirming the importance of church together.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits helped to lower stress levels and provided virtual access to health care.
- The ELCA Retirement Plan continued to deliver strong investment returns while offering no- or low-cost access to financial planning and coaching services.

In recent years, we've brought added stability to our program by extending quality, cost-effective benefits to more of those who serve. As we include more ELCA-affiliated social ministry organizations, colleges, and universities, as well as full communion partner denominations, we grow the size of our pool, which, in turn, allows us to secure lower administrative fees and innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups. In this way, we continue our mission to serve those who serve.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Meeting the Need in 2021

869

Plays of New Portico Podcast

Hosted by an ELCA pastor on current issues impacting our faith community.

34%

Chose New Voluntary Benefit

Through our cost-saving vision care services provider.

643

Retired

In Portico's bundled benefits program – Well done, good and faithful servants!

7.3%

Annuity Payment Increase

Approved for ELCA annuitants in 2022.

2,564

Medical Visits via Text

Through 98point6®, our virtual primary health care service.

8

Large Organizations Joined

In 2021 – 1 ELCA college, 6 ELCA-affiliated social ministries, and 1 full communion partner social ministry.

2,880

Classes Completed in 2021

On Burnalong, Portico's new online fitness and wellness benefit.

76%

More Accessed Financial Coaching

Through LSS of Minnesota in 2021 than during the same period in 2020.

87.8%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care Center service.



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Siblings in Christ of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod,

2021 was many things — frustrating, surprising, heartbreaking, and heartening — to name a few. At Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, however, the word we find ourselves using the most is *transformative*.

Like all of you, we found ourselves facing parallel crises: the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, an influx of vulnerable immigrant children at our border, and the devastating refugee crisis in Afghanistan. While it was an incredibly difficult year in many ways, it was also one of the most inspiring in our 83-year history.

People of faith and communities like yours stepped up in ways that we never could have expected to meet this moment and fulfill our Biblical call to welcome the stranger. In the last year alone:

- 100,000 volunteers signed up to support our refugee and immigrant neighbors
- Supporters provided more than \$30,000 worth of essential items like cell phones and gift cards to our Afghan brothers and sisters
- 14,000+ generous donors opened their hearts to the ministry of welcome
- LIRS welcomed more than 10,500 Afghans through our nationwide resettlement network
- Our team assisted in reunifying or placing nearly 33,000 children in loving homes
- We sent nearly 20,000 holiday cards and 1,750+ gifts to families affected by immigration detention
- LIRS launched several exciting new programs and offices, such as field offices in Northern Virginia and Fargo, ND; the New American Cities economic empowerment program; Mental Health services for refugee children and families, and more.

Our resettlement and immigration services were complemented by our ever-growing slate of annual programs, which offer the public opportunities to ADAPT: Act, Donate, Advocate, Pray, and Teach. We invite you to engage with LIRS, as an individual or community, through one of our five key programs:

- Stand Up Speak Up — Our interfaith advocacy program organized each spring
- Gather - A cultural education program hosted in the fall
- Hope for the Holidays™ - LIRS' flagship winter program for supporting families impacted by immigration detention
- EMMAUS Congregational Network – Our network of congregations who receive resources and support from LIRS
- LIRS Ambassador Network – A community of change-makers from around the US

In 2022, we are deepening our commitment to the work of welcome and believe that together, we can realize Matthew 25:35 in communities across the United States. We are so grateful for your astounding support and look forward to welcoming our newest neighbors alongside you.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Witte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Kristin Witte, Director for Outreach

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Mission

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is a voluntary association of separate and autonomous Christian churches, within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through which its members seek to manifest their fellowship (koinonia) with one another, to engage in common ministries of witness and service, and to advance towards the goal of visible unity.

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches has marked significant transition and staff change during this past year.

I initiated conversations with judicatory leaders to begin a dialogue about ways in which the Council can be initiative-taking in working with our judicatories and congregational leaders. In my conversations with judicatory leadership throughout the Commonwealth they expressed the importance of the Council of Churches serving as a connection hub where best practices occur. Creating a communication channel is important to leaders as we examine and share what is happening in our various faith communities. There is a need for greater communication and cooperation which represents an opportunity for greater vitality and purpose for both the Council of Churches and our ecumenical partners. The judicatory leaders with whom I talked this year, expressed a desire to have time for spiritual reflection and dialogue with their counterparts. The Council will need to make this happen in 2022. Judicatory leaders are interested in learning about my leadership role at the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. I have communicated that my purpose is to be a catalyst for a 21st Century vision.

The Pennsylvania of Churches is at an inflection point and the zeitgeist requires transformational priorities as we consider the future. The United Church Center is a tremendous asset for ministry and ecumenical engagement. However, aging structures and changing priorities will require initiative-taking leadership on our part.

During this past year, the United Church Center experienced three separate episodes of flooding in the basement. In response to this development, I am initiating the placement of backflow valves in our drainage system to insure against this damage occurring again. We are also moving to replace carpet in the damaged areas which will allow us to rent spaces that have been unoccupied since the flooding occurred this past summer. The flooding has caused upheaval and damage; it also exposes the need for the United Church Center to have a cadre of persons who can serve as consultants and provide guidance on building management issues. Our Finance and Facilities Committee manages the financial issues related to the building and the Service Department, but we need a committee or group that can provide support on brick-and-2 mortar issues within the Center. We will be reaching out to judicatories and local churches for volunteers to help us in this area.

Early into my tenure it became apparent that the transition of our fiscal management was not going well. At that point I began to consult with members of the Finance and Facilities Committee and others to find a solution. In consultation with the Executive Committee and Board of Directors we contracted with the accounting firm McKonly & Asbury to take on our

accounting needs. We have worked to establish a stronger relationship between the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and its program entities. The Leisure Campground Ministry, the Fruitbelt Ministry, and the I-80 Truck Stop Ministry. These are ministries through which anticipate building greater outreach and program opportunities. I anticipate other programmatic areas to which we will expand the Council of Churches, as we meet the support needs of our constituents.

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches and Rev. Dr. Dale Bruce Snyder, the pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, PA. began a partnership last year. Rev. Snyder shared with me the story of Bethel AME Church, established in 1808 which has a long history of significant ministry in the Lower Hill community of Pittsburgh. James Baldwin once said that "Urban renewal meant negro removal." In 1957, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was torn down, as a part of urban renewal when it was cited as blighted property within the Lower Hill District of Pittsburgh. In that year, the congregation received \$240,000 in compensation for the eminent domain taking which led to the redevelopment in the area. This took place while a nearby white congregation did not experience displacement because of the redevelopment. The congregation is convinced that their church was targeted because of their advocacy and progressive role in the Black community. When the taking occurred, the congregation lacked the legal resources and political connections to advocate for fair compensation. The original church property became part of the Civic Arena which is the home of the Pittsburgh Penguins Hockey Club; this is noteworthy because there are signs that the team's ownership is interested in collaborating with the congregation in seeking repair for the injustices that occurred over 60 years ago. I have decided to support this initiative in promoting justice, reparations, and Bethel's restoration. We also developed a proposal to present a workshop on reparations during the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, "Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity." This theme will represent the gathering of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The proposed workshop around reparations in an ecclesial context offers the opportunity to promote and discuss repair, justice, and community building, leading to unity. The people of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church are collaborating with developers and white faith communities to create a community platform to address the historic injustice that diminished their ministry. Reparations represent repairing that which has destroyed within the community's social fabric. Reconciliation can only take place in a setting of honesty and repentance. This workshop opens conversations about ways in which white communities can begin purging themselves of white supremacy, which serves as a base for the injustice represented in the Bethel story. Reconciliation is difficult and challenging; it must come from the demanding work of confronting the historical injustices that divide our communities. Anything short of this would represent what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "Cheap Grace." Love is at the core of reconciliation. The ideal outcome is that we have an interactive conversation about the way in which congregations and Councils of Churches can play a significant role in restoring faith communities and revitalizing neighborhoods. This is also an opportunity to strategize about engaging business, civic, and community groups in the restoration process. Building partnerships to repair communities is critical to the future and is a manifestation of sharing the love of Christ as we build "Beloved Community." We see this as a case study for other contexts. to instruct congregational leaders about the importance of developing community partnerships to address injustice.

- We celebrate the work of Susan Loucks who is leading our Vision and Leadership process. I am asking our judicatory leadership and churches to get involved in this process as we plan work of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. In relation to our visioning process, it is important that the Council of Churches develops an orientation process for our board members who serve the Council. I am encouraging our Personnel and Executive Committees to develop an orientation process for incoming directors. This will allow us to communicate our expectations and create an atmosphere that will allow both our staff, directors, and volunteer directors to engage their roles effectively in healthy and effective ways. Judicatory and Community Affiliations My work includes my engagement with community and judicatory entities.

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches serves our partner faith communities as we all become most effective in creating unity in the Body of Christ.

Larry D. Pickens , Executive Director



United Lutheran Seminary (ULS) is one of seven seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). ULS is comprised of two physical campuses, Philadelphia, and Gettysburg, and distributed online learning. ULS is a Reconciling in Christ seminary. The ULS Community is a welcoming and diverse learning community equipping people to proclaim the living Gospel for a changing church and world. The seminary offers six graduate degree programs, with flexible learning options, and lifelong learning programs that equip rostered and lay leaders to serve with deep faith and excellence—in congregations, social ministry agencies, campus ministries, military settings, and global missions.

The Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin was appointed president of United Lutheran Seminary and Ministerium of Pennsylvania Chair and Professor of Reformation Studies on August 1, 2020. Prior to this appointment, he was fourth bishop of the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

United Lutheran Seminary is blessed to be able to offer financial support, in the form of scholarship awards, to all students who are enrolled in degree seeking programs. First level professional degrees include the Master of Divinity (MDiv) and the Master of Arts in Ministerial

Leadership (MAML). Academic first level degrees are the Master of Arts in Public Leadership (MAPL) and the Master of Arts (MA). Second level theology degrees include the Master of Sacred Theology (STM) and the Doctor of Ministry (DMIN). In the fall of 2021, United Lutheran Seminary has a total of 356 enrolled students.

In addition to the general curricular offerings, there are other learning opportunities that directly and indirectly support the pedagogical tasks of unifying, learning, and serving. The Urban Theological Institute enables engagement with African American theology, preaching, and church history throughout the curriculum. The Town and Country Church Institute offers students the possibility of honing ministry to meet the needs of rural and small-town churches in a time of profound change. The annual Asian Theological Summer Institute enables mentorship of Asian and Asian-American doctoral students.

Contributions to the seminary provide hope for the future of our church. Your gift empowers seminary education for our future faith leaders. These leaders will take what they have learned at ULS and apply it to where God calls them in their future ministry contexts, continuing what God has started during their time at the seminary. A variety of giving options are available. Contact us at [**advancement@uls.edu**](mailto:advancement@uls.edu) to learn more or give online at [**uls.edu/give**](https://uls.edu/give).

United Lutheran Seminary is a place of rich history and excellent theological education. Explore a brief history of the two predecessor bodies at our website. Contact us today at [**info@uls.edu**](mailto:info@uls.edu) to learn more or explore how we can help you live out your call as a servant of God and neighbor. If you have ideas that we can share in our expanding continuing education program, send them to us at [**learningwishlist@uls.edu**](mailto:learningwishlist@uls.edu).

Rev. Dr. Martin Otto-Zimmann
Director of Church Relations



United Lutheran Seminary



“United Lutheran Seminary was founded in 2017 from two predecessor schools with over 300 combined years of experience in raising up rostered leaders for the church. The pandemic serves as a stark reminder for all of us to live in ways that have purpose and meaning. As we emerge into a ‘new normal’ and are confronted with new challenges in ministry, our faculty, staff, and students are working together to create a faith formation experience that will meet the needs of God’s people in a variety of ministry contexts.”

Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin

President, United Lutheran Seminary

Who We Are

Unifying, Learning, Serving. ULS is a premier graduate professional school, offering theological education and leadership formation that is academically rigorous and practically oriented to more than 350 students each year.

What We Offer

ULS offers 6 Masters and 1 Doctorate degree, along with 3 certificate programs with flexible learning options with two physical campuses in Philadelphia and Gettysburg, PA and a robust Distributed Learning Community. Non-degree opportunities include our Urban Theological Institute, Guatemala Immersion Semester, Asian Theological Summer Institute, Town & Country Church Institute and Stewardship of Life Institute.

What Makes Us Unique

The generosity of synods, benefactors and friends has enabled ULS to offer all degree seeking students with up to full tuition scholarships, keeping student debt well below the national average.

Our Leadership

United Lutheran Seminary was founded in 2017 from two predecessor schools with over 300 combined years of experience in raising up rostered leaders for the church. The pandemic serves as a stark reminder for all of us to live in ways that have purpose and meaning. As we emerge into a “new normal” and are confronted with new challenges in ministry, our faculty, staff, and students are working together to create a faith formation experience that will meet the needs of God’s people in a variety of ministry contexts.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

As the Seminary reexamines the demand for learning opportunities outside degree or certificate programs, it seeks your input. We would like to hear from you: What is your learning wish list? What theological disciplines interest you? Whether it’s called Lifelong Learning or Continuing Education, ULS will develop a series of lectures, single and multiple day events on both campuses and virtually, to create sustained engagement in study and discussion. Let us know your ideas by sending them to learningwishlist@uls.edu.

Rev. Dr. Martin Otto-Zimmann

Senior Director of Continuing Education

Learn more at uls.edu and [@unitedlutheranseminary](https://twitter.com/unitedlutheranseminary)



ARCHIVES *Advocate*

Northeast Regional Archives • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Vol. 6 No. 2, WINTER 2021-22

Hidden Treasures

by Lisa Minardi



Christmas and New Year's broadside from the Singing School of Zion Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. Printed by Melchior Steiner, Philadelphia, 1784. Collection of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia. PHOTO BY GAVIN ASHWORTH

As we continue to sort through the backlog of uncatalogued material stored within our vault, many "hidden treasures" are coming to light. We highlight these discoveries from time to time on our Facebook page and encourage you to like our page in order to see the latest discoveries. One recent find is this broadside, printed for the singing school of Zion Lutheran Church in Philadelphia for Christmas and New Year's in 1784-85. It is titled *Die Frohe Weihnachts=Freude, 1784 und Neujahrs=Andacht, 1785 / Der Evangelischen Lutherischen Singeschule der Gemeinde in Zion* (translation: The Happy Christmas Joy, 1784, and New Year's Devotion, 1785. The Evangelical Lutheran Singing School of the Congregation in Zion). At the bottom, the broadside bears the imprint of Melchior Steiner located on Race Street in Philadelphia. The son of Rev. Conrad Steiner, pastor of the German Reformed Church in Philadelphia, Melchior Steiner apprenticed with the German printer Henrich Miller. After striking out on his own, he initially printed with Carl Cist, but they dissolved the partnership in 1781 and he continued on with his own printshop. A member of the German Society of Pennsylvania (est. 1764), Steiner printed a weekly German language newspaper as well as numerous books, pamphlets, and broadsides. He printed for a wide range of customers, including both the Lutherans and Moravians. He died in 1807.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

Despite being closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 has been an exceptionally busy year at the Lutheran Archives. Our staff and volunteers continue to make good progress on cataloguing our backlog of unprocessed material stored in our vault. Linda Beck, our volunteer extraordinaire, has tackled organizing the records of several closed congregations that were already in our stacks. This included weeding out multiple copies of various documents and grouping like items into categories, then placing them in neatly labeled archival folders. Although time consuming, this process makes it much easier to find specific information and reduces the amount of space taken up in our vault to make room for additional records.

Sheila Joy, our associate archivist, has been busy preparing inventory listings and finding aids for various groups of church records in our holdings. She also continues to answer research inquiries, including requests for proof of baptism as well as genealogy queries from people looking to track down their ancestors. Sheila is also becoming an expert on how to use our PastPerfect collections management database, including how to import files and images so that we can start putting our collections online in the near future.

We were also blessed to receive a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to help us with the Ministerium of Pennsylvania collection, which includes the records of more than 200 colonial Lutheran churches along with Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's journals. This grant includes an inventory and cataloging of the entire collection as well as preparation of a detailed finding aid that will be shared online. It also includes funding for archival supplies to help improve the storage conditions for many of these rare, and often unique, manuscripts and other items. Melissa Bergoffen joined our team this summer as the project archivist for the PHMC grant.

To help us continue with these efforts and carry out our mission to preserve and share the archival history of the Lutheran Church in America, we need your support. Year-end contributions will help us to hire ULS students as archives assistants to aid in processing our backlog of material as well as to process the influx of records from newly closed congregations. Please consider making a generous donation to support the Lutheran Archives Center, either online at lacphila.org/donate or via check in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

Lisa Minardi
Lisa Minardi
Executive Director

*Thank you for
your support!*

Ministerium of Pennsylvania Collection Project

by Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist

In March 2021, the Lutheran Archives was awarded a Historical & Archival Records Care grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in order to help preserve and make accessible the records of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States (MOP). I was hired as the Project Archivist to oversee this project, which includes inventorying and cataloging an estimated 10,000 records, assessing their condition, and creating a detailed finding aid to make the collection easily accessible to researchers. I am also promoting awareness of the collection and LACAP as a whole through our social media (Facebook and Instagram)

as well as our newly created blog (lutheranarchives.blogspot.com).

The Ministerium of Pennsylvania was founded in 1748 by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. The MOP collection holds many records pertaining to the Ministerium's creation, such as its constitution, meeting minutes, and correspondence. It also contains Muhlenberg's journals, many church records, and other unique manuscripts dating from the 1700s to mid-1900s. You can learn more about the history of the MOP on our blog under a recent post titled "Lutheranism and the Ministerium of Pennsylvania: Its Beginnings to the Late 1700s."



Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist, in front of shelves housing part of the MOP collection

stopped taking photos and writing such detailed descriptions. Another time-consuming step is removing old metal fasteners, such as rusty staples and paperclips, which we will come back to at a later date.

Although this project is still in the early stages, we are planning ahead for the future arrangement of the MOP collection and how best to organize all of its records. We are grateful for the opportunity to process the MOP collection in order to preserve and make its holdings more accessible to researchers. This collection is vital to understanding the history of Lutheranism in America due to its unique manuscript records of more than 200 colonial Lutheran churches—including births and baptisms, confirmation, marriages, and deaths—as well as pastoral and financial records. We thank the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for awarding us a Historical & Archival Records Care grant to care for this collection, and all of our supporters for encouraging the work that we do!



I have been working with the MOP collection for just over three months now. My go-to tool so far is Google sheets, where I record information about each item such as its creator, title, dates, location, description, and condition. This information will later be transferred to PastPerfect, our collections management database, and then online to allow researchers to peruse our holdings. I also cross-reference each item with the spreadsheet version of the original card catalogue to ensure that all MOP items are accounted for. About two months into the project, we realized it was going too slowly, so to expedite the process, I

The MOP collection contains a broad range of items including minute books, correspondence, pamphlets, loose manuscripts, and even corporate seals. Tools that I use for processing the collection include a pencil, pH testing marker, staple remover, pliers, and measuring tape.

Highlights from Our Blog

by *Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist*

The following information is taken from our newly created blog (lutheranarchives.blogspot.com). As part of the MOP grant project, I am performing a conditions assessment of the items as I inventory and catalog them. This includes noting any preservation issues—from discoloration or the use of metal fasteners to mold or broken bindings—and rating them on a scale from poor to excellent condition. After this initial survey is completed, I will address the simpler preservation issues, such as unfolding creased documents or removing metal fasteners and rubber bands. Before tackling the more significant issues, we will consult with a professional conservator on how to handle more difficult repairs. To learn more about this topic, check out our blog post titled “Conservation: Preserving Archival Materials.”

Examples of preservation issues commonly found within archives (clockwise from top left): manuscript with a paperclip that has rusted onto the paper; mold and foxing on the edge of a document; a book whose spine is completely detached from the binding; and a stack of documents once held together by a rubber band, which has stuck to and stained the paper.



Church Records Listings Now Available Online

by *Sheila Joy, Associate Archivist*

We are very excited to announce that we have begun adding church record inventory lists and finding aids to our website, making our collections more accessible and discoverable to researchers across the globe. These can now be searched through on our website: <https://www.lacphila.org/collections>.

Soon after my arrival last year, I discovered the need to create user-friendly collection listings for the public. While there were existing inventory listings created, they were formatted in a

way only archives staff would understand and were not user-friendly for researchers. I also created finding aids for individual collections to provide more detailed information than an inventory listing. These will be continually updated and uploaded to our website as collections are processed. The inventory listings provide the title, description, date, and location of the physical items. This will help researchers to find what they are looking for and makes it easier for staff to provide relevant information or photocopies of material to researchers.

These listings would not be possible without the cataloging work undertaken by our predecessors. The original card catalog for our Ministerium of Pennsylvania Collection was created in the 1970s and had never been digitized until nearly 50 years later when ULS students Bridget Gautieri and Danielle McCleary entered all the information into a spreadsheet. Student assistant Courtney Smith created an additional spreadsheet to inventory collections that were received after the card catalog ceased to



Associate Archivist Sheila Joy works on preparing our reference library records to be imported into PastPerfect.

be updated sometime in the 1980s. It is amazing to see the timeline of collections listings—from card catalog to spreadsheet to PDFs and now our online collections management database: PastPerfect!

In 2022, we will begin cataloging all our collections into PastPerfect. We have already cataloged the Augustana Institute's objects and library books, and our reference library is just about finished. We are excited to share our PastPerfect database with you when it goes live, sometime in early 2022. Researchers will then be able to search our collections in a more robust way than through the finding aids on our websites. Be sure to follow along for updates and behind the scenes on our Facebook page by searching “Lutheran Archives Center” or on Instagram @lutheranarchives!



Screenshot of our webpage for the Pennsylvania Congregation Records holdings, with inventory listings available to view and download. To see all our church record listings available online, go to www.lacphila.org/collections

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Newsletter of the
Lutheran Archives Center
at Philadelphia

Vol. 6 No. 2, WINTER 2021-22

Lutheran Archives Center
AT PHILADELPHIA

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I recently went through a box of old Christmas decorations and, tucked among the various ornaments, I found one that I had purchased about twenty years ago from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. I had visited the National Archives during a Christmas vacation and found this Christmas ornament on sale. Every year I hang this ornament on my tree as a reminder, not simply of a fun family vacation to our nation's capital, but also as a reminder of our country's rich archival heritage. In 2026 we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States of America. During this Semiquincentennial, we will undoubtedly be reminded of the primary source documents that proclaim the foundation of our American democracy and are preserved within the National Archives' collection.

At the Lutheran Archives Center, we have an archival heritage that predates the founding of this country. Our archives preserve documents that date back to the very beginnings of what became the "American experiment." We are privileged to be the custodians of this rich archival heritage. We wish you blessings as one year comes to an end and as we prepare to begin another, and we invite your continued prayers and support for our archives throughout this coming year!

Respectfully,

J. Francis Watson
President of the Board

LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, we advocate for wise and just public policies in Pennsylvania that promote the common good. Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa) is a shared ministry of seven Pennsylvania synods, ELCA Service and Justice, and Pennsylvania ELCA agencies and institutions. Through LAMPa, Lutherans who are working to eradicate hunger are supported to voice their faith convictions in the public square with and on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors and the world we share, while seeking to create a more just Commonwealth.

Since last year's assembly, LAMPa celebrated 42 years of advocacy ministry that supported and deepened your congregational efforts to address hunger, poverty, health care, education equity, civic engagement, immigration, housing and homelessness, criminal justice reform and care for creation. Our decades of advocacy on these issues have enabled us to lift up the needs of your ministries and communities to secure emergency food, shelter, access to medical care and other relief in response to COVID-19. Your advocacy through LAMPa helped secure millions in additional funding for the State Food Purchase Program, which supplies food to many of our congregational pantries. It also won an extra \$100 million targeted to the neediest school districts across the state and \$10 million in housing tax credits to promote affordable housing development and preservation.

In its work of equipping disciples, growing leaders and supporting vital congregations, LAMPa hosted both a United Lutheran Seminary intern and an ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellow. In September, LAMPa hosted state, national and global partners in a sustainability summit to launch a churchwide pilot in Pennsylvania to help our ministries, from congregations to campuses and camps, reach the global climate change mitigation goals. In addition to helping advocates prepare testimony on a variety of issues related to their ministry, LAMPa staff participated in the ULS spring convocation and connected all PA synods in creation care advocacy through a statewide marking of rogation. LAMPa hosted webinars on accompaniment models of ministry with those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, resulting in the adoption of new ministries in several congregations. LAMPa staff continues to serve in consultation to the ELCA task force developing the social statement on Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in Democracy, and continues to educate faithful advocates through our website, e-news and other resources. We are working with congregational leaders to prepare for God's work. Our hands. Sunday in September and look forward with hope that we might be able to work side by side on that day.

We give thanks to God for you and for the support of our Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Policy Council representatives, the Rev. Richard Baumann and Vicar Dillon Epler.

With deep gratitude for all the ways in which you support LAMPa's ministry,

Tracey DePasquale
LAMPa Director

LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

Lutheran Congregational Services (LCS) began in the early 1970s as an organization committed to providing chaplaincy services to hospitals and other institutions. Over time, our services have evolved but the intent to creatively help congregations live out their missions of faith and service, continues. As we partner with communities of many kinds throughout eastern Pennsylvania, we continue to be encouraged by how God calls people together to support those who are hurting and most vulnerable.

As part of the Liberty Lutheran family of services, our programs include disaster response, Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training, bereavement support programs, and consulting.

Lutheran Disaster Response - Eastern Pennsylvania. LCS serves as the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response affiliate in the 19 counties of eastern PA.

· Hurricane Ida. In September 2021, Hurricane Ida hit the east coast. Eight counties in Pennsylvania have received federal declarations for Individual Assistance, including Northampton County in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Lutheran Disaster Response – Eastern PA is leading efforts in Pennsylvania to help families meet long term Ida needs, a process that will continue for at least two to three years. Many congregations stepped up to support survivors early on. It is exciting to see Lutheran congregations be such a strong safety network in their communities. The more support there is right after a disaster event the fewer long term needs exist. Thank you NEPS and congregations for your efforts!

· Ukraine. LCs continues to partner with the ELCA LDR offices to support international efforts in response to the war in Ukraine.

· Tropical Storm Isaias Recovery in Eastwick, Philadelphia. In early August 2020, Isaias left a path of destruction as it came up the Delaware Bay, and then roughly the northeast extension of the PA Turnpike through to the Poconos. While recovery has concluded in many areas, the Eastwick neighborhood of Philadelphia, an area that's survived and even thrived in some regards despite decades of environmental injustices, is still recovering from devastating flooding. In partnership with Eastwick United CDC, Lutheran Congregational Services leads the Eastwick Unmet Needs Roundtable (EUNR). Other partners include UCC Disaster Ministries, The Salvation Army, and local authorities and community partners. LCS is also responsible for the case management portion of the process. We have been able to do this in part thanks to a grant from the ELCS/LDR for \$140,000. These efforts have ensured that 25 families who went without heat and/or hot water in the winter of 2020 did not have to do so again in 2021.

While we are making progress and have almost all funding secured, our greatest need is VOLUNTEERS as we continue to reconstruct portions of 30 homes. The pandemic has been barriers to faster progress; yet we persist. Thank you, Trinity Lutheran, Kutztown, and Holy Spirit Lutheran, Emmaus, as well as individuals from other churches for joining us! If you would like to volunteer, please contact Julia Menzo, jmenzo@libertylutheran.org if you would like to donate or volunteer for this effort.

· COVID-19. In partnership with Rev. Dr. Morgan Gordy, LCS presented “Providing Spiritual Care in COVID” to the Congregational Care Task Force in Northeastern Penn Synod on April 30, 2022.

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training (LEVT)

· LCS is very happy to announce that Pastor Brandon Heavner from St. Marks Lutheran in Bethlehem is now one of our trainers for this program. Trainings in 2022 include May 8, Good Shepherd Reading; June 4, St. Michael’s Sellersville; September 10, Christ Conyngham; October 1, Advent West Chester. Please visit our website to register.

Bereavement Ministries

· Our Bereavement program is led by Sylvia Havlish, certified grief counselor. In person sessions had been on hold during the pandemic, but we have begun offering them again. “Journeys Through Grief,” a closed Facebook group for those who want a more informal setting or who wish to stay connected to others after the traditional 6 week session concludes, is also available.

· Please do not hesitate to reach out to Sylvia Havlish directly about individual counseling sessions.

Church consultation

· The LCS network of providers is available for Adult Forums, discussions with church groups, Temple Talks, workshops and more to inspire dialogue around topics related to church preparedness, personal and community resiliency, church security, disaster and climate change, and more.

LCS is led by Director of Community Outreach, Julia Menzo. Programs are administered by a network of contracted employees, part time staff, the LCS Advisory Committee, volunteers, the public relations and advancement departments at Liberty Lutheran, and through a vast network of congregational and community partners across eastern PA.

LCS is a ministry of the Liberty Lutheran family of services. The entire family of Liberty communities—Artman, Paul’s Run, The Hearth at Drexel, The Village at Penn State, and The Manor at York Town—continue to be devoted to an approach of care and service that focuses on each resident’s unique preferences and activities. Liberty services, including Lutheran Congregational Services, The Becoming Center, LCFS-West Philadelphia Senior Community Center, Liberty Lutheran Foundation, and Liberty at Home, continue to foster relationships and collaboration with partners to enrich the lives of those we serve.

We welcome conversations with pastors and congregational members. Find information about LCS on our website at www.libertylutheran/lcs, and on the Northeastern Penn Synod website. Follow us on Facebook @LCSMission.

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Menzo
Director of Community Outreach
Lutheran Congregational Services
jmenzo@libertylutheran.org; 267-464-7740

BETHLEHEM-EASTON	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
BETHLEHEM, HOLY CROSS-2002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
BETHLEHEM, ROSEMONT-2005	544.00	0.00	80.00	0.00	800.00	0.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. JOHN WINDISH-2007	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00	5,000.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. MARK-2008	0.00	900.00	0.00	6,000.00	10,352.39	6,000.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. PAUL-2010	587.00	0.00	0.00	3,800.00	2,400.00	1,800.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. PETER-2011	520.00	0.00	25.00	9,265.00	6,665.35	9,257.50
BETHLEHEM, ST. STEPHEN-2012	876.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
EASTON, ARNDTS (FORKS TWP)-2015	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
EASTON, GOOD SHEPHERD-2017	0.00	1,694.04	0.00	0.00	5,403.24	0.00
EASTON, ST. ANDREW-2018	0.00	0.00	0.00	22,500.00	22,500.00	22,500.00
EASTON, ST. JOHN-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	14,000.00	14,000.04	14,700.00
EASTON, ST. PAUL-2020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00
EASTON, ST. PAUL THIRD-2021	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
HELLERTOWN, CHRIST-2025	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	17,500.00
MARTINS CREEK, GOOD SHEPHERD-2027	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	404.00	0.00
WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP, ST. JOHN-2028	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
SAUCON VALLEY, NEW JERUSALEM-2030	1,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
TATAMY, HOPE-2031	3,745.50	1,700.00	0.00	7,291.00	5,563.49	0.00
WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP, ST. LUKE.-2032	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,159.00	0.00
BETHLEHEM, LIGHT OF CHRIST-2033	5,099.00	0.00	369.00	15,500.00	15,500.00	15,500.00
BETHLEHEM, STAR OF BETHLEHEM-2034	0.00	2,070.00	230.00	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
BETHLEHEM-EASTON DIST. MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	12,871.50	6,364.04	3,704.00	82,856.00	130,747.51	115,757.50

Total churches responding

22

22

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

EAST BERKS	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
BECHTELSVILLE, TRINITY-3001	3,695.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,434.50	6,000.00
BLANDON, MAIDENCREEK-3002	1,000.00	0.00	1,245.00	0.00	5,262.50	0.00
BOWERS, HOPE-3003	0.00	0.00	0.00	400.00	607.00	600.00
BOYERTOWN, ST. JOHN-3004	804.00	1,072.00	378.00	0.00	30,000.00	0.00
MOHRSVILLE, (SALEM) BELLEMAN'S-3005	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	1,463.75	3,000.00
DOUGLASSVILLE, ST. PAUL-3007	2,651.00	0.00	935.00	46,200.00	46,200.00	46,200.00
DRYVILLE, CHRIST-3008	270.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21,000.00	0.00
FLEETWOOD, ST. PAUL-3009	1,728.03	0.00	954.98	12,000.00	13,500.00	0.00
HAMBURG, ST. JOHN.-3010	409.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	16,580.25	15,500.00
HAMBURG, ST. MICHAEL-3011	99.00	95.00	30.00	0.00	839.00	0.00
HAMBURG, ST. PAUL-3012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BOYERTOWN, ST. JOSEPH (HILL) - 3013	893.00	21.00	0.00	0.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
ALBURTIS, HUFFS, - 3014	15.00	0.00	46.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
FLEETWOOD, NEW JERUSALEM-3015	65.00	0.00	60.00	0.00	2,176.00	2,000.00
KEMPTON, NEW BETHEL-3017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	750.00	0.00
STONY RUN, FRIEDENS-3018	1,085.00	500.00	1,000.00	0.00	5,200.00	0.00
KRUMSVILLE, MT. ZION-3019	199.00	0.00	55.00	0.00	1,250.80	2,500.00
KUTZTOWN, ST. JOHN-3020	533.00	0.00	0.00	7,600.00	7,596.00	7,600.00
KUTZTOWN, TRINITY-3021	3,135.00	0.00	3,415.00	0.00	22,896.00	0.00
OLEY, ST. PAUL (LOBACHSVILLE)-3023	0.00	0.00	720.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00
FLEETWOOD, SALEM.(SHALTERS)-3024	75.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,700.00	2,100.00
MAXATAWNY, ZION-3025	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	11,000.15	10,000.00
MERTZTOWN, ST. PAUL-3026	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	600.00
KUTZTOWN, ZION MOSELEM-3027	0.00	100.00	160.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
FLEETWOOD, ST. PETER (BECKERS)-3028	0.00	0.00	250.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,200.00
OLEY, FRIEDENS-3029	2,085.50	4.00	50.00	0.00	19,865.00	0.00
PERRY TOWNSHIP, ZION -3030	3,030.00	225.00	95.00	0.00	11,000.00	11,000.00
SHOEMAKERSVILLE, ST. LUKE-3031	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	793.00	300.00
LEESPORT, ST. JOHN. (GERNANTS)-3032	0.00	0.00	750.00	0.00	2,000.04	2,000.00
OLEY, CHRIST (SPANGSVILLE)-3033	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
READING, ZION SPIES-3034	550.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	7,000.00	0.00
TOPTON, TRINITY-3035	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,041.67	6,041.68	0.00
TOPTON HOME, GRACE-3036	1,000.00	425.00	625.00	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
LEESPORT, HOLY TRINITY-3037	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	0.00
SHARTLESVILLE, FRIEDENS-3038	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,201.46	7,000.00
EAST BERKS DISTRICT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	23,322.24	2,442.00	10,818.98	100,241.67	291,507.13	141,600.00

Total churches responding

36

36

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

HAZLETON-LEHIGHTON	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
ASHFIELD, DINKEY MEMORIAL-4001	3,286.80	0.00	0.00	2,800.00	2,800.00	2,800.00
BIG CREEK, ST. PAUL-4002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	400.00	0.00
AUDENRIED, SALEM-4003	419.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	954.00	1,000.00
BEAVER MEADOWS, ST. PAUL-4004	162.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,001.00	3,100.00
BOWMANSTOWN, TRINITY-4005	848.10	0.00	0.00	1,400.00	1,671.00	1,400.00
PENN FOREST. TWP, CHRIST-4006	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	3,000.00
CONYNGHAM, CHRIST-4007	7,929.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	54,269.00	52,000.00
MAHONING, ST. JOHN-4008	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
FREELAND, ST. LUKE-4009	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
HAZLETON, CHRIST-4011	1,490.00	0.00	340.00	20,500.00	20,376.00	20,500.00
HAZLETON, TRINITY-4012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,282.00	0.00
JIM THORPE EAST, ST. JOHN-4013	514.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,423.50	5,000.00
JIM THORPE HGHTS, ST. JOHN-4014	702.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,608.00	7,608.00
LANSFORD, TRINITY-4015	155.00	10000.00	20000.00	5,000.00	5,798.00	5,000.00
LEHIGHTON, TRINITY-4016	5,762.11	1,000.00	4,320.00	12,000.00	13,943.36	10,000.00
LEHIGHTON, GRACE-4017	287.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	909.00	0.00
PACKERTON, ZION-4018	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	0.00
MAHANOEY CITY, CHRIST-4019	220.00	247.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
NEW RINGGOLD, FRIEDENS-4022	1,133.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,641.00	0.00
N WEISSPORT, ST. MATTHEW-4023	937.00	911.00	1,000.00	4,554.00	5,127.00	0.00
NUREMBERG, EMMANUEL-4024	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
ZION GROVE, MT ZION-4025	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,200.00	0.00
PALMERTON, HOLY TRINITY-4026	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,004.00	2,400.00
RINGTOWN, ST. JOHN-4029	1,800.00	125.00	0.00	8,900.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
BRANDONVILLE, ST. JOHN-4030	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,800.00	5,800.00
SAINT JOHNS, ST. JOHN-4031	2,700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,120.00	0.00
SHENANDOAH, ST. JOHN-4032	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SUMMIT HILL, ST. PAUL-4033	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	449.00	0.00
TAMAQUA, ST. JOHN-4035	220.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,901.00	5,000.00
TAMAQUA, ZION-4036	1,783.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,400.00	6,000.00
TOWAMENSING, ST. JOHN-4037	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00
TRACHSVILLE, JERUSALEM-4038	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,400.00	3,000.00
WEATHERLY, ST. MATTHEW-4039	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
WEATHERLY, ZION-4040	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
WEST HAZLETON, TRINITY-4042	191.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,125.00	0.00
MANTZVILLE, ST. PETER-4043	0.00	248.00	0.00	0.00	7,523.00	7,500.00
WEST PENN, ZION STONE-4044	500.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
WHITE HAVEN, ST. PAUL-4045	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,500.00	0.00
HAZLETON-LEHIGHTON MISC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	31,039.61	13,031.00	26,160.00	66,154.00	215,124.86	166,108.00

Total churches responding

39

39

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

LEHIGH	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
ALBURTIS, ZION LEHIGH-1001	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,559.00	0.00
ALLENTOWN, CHRIST-1002	1,097.50	0.00	585.00	41,000.00	44,754.00	41,000.00
ALLENTOWN, REDEEMER-1005	883.00	1,360.00	1,505.00	0.00	5,485.00	5,000.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. JOHN-1007	0.00	0.00	0.00	28,020.00	28,020.00	28,020.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. LUKE-1009	100.00	500.00	0.00	250.00	782.00	250.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. MARK-1010	184.00	450.00	0.00	0.00	2,212.00	1,890.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. PETER/HANOVER-1014	75.00	0.00	70.00	0.00	2,400.00	0.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. TIMOTHY-1017	3,380.00	0.00	2,650.00	6,500.00	6,500.00	7,500.00
ALLENTOWN, TRINITY MEMORIAL-1018	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
CETRONIA, CEDAR-1019	1,121.50	0.00	500.00	0.00	11,758.60	0.00
COOPERSBURG, ST. JAMES-1020	305.00	1,024.00	0.00	1,917.00	23,004.00	23,000.00
COOPERSBURG, ST. PAUL-1021	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
EMMAUS, HOLY SPIRIT-1022	3,625.00	0.00	3,900.00	33,000.00	33,000.00	33,000.00
EMMAUS, ST. JOHN-1023	4,360.00	0.00	773.00	0.00	14,320.63	12,000.00
FOGELSVILLE, ST. JOHN-1024	345.00	1,981.85	340.00	6,500.00	6,204.06	5,850.00
FRIEDENSVILLE, FRIEDENS-1025	365.00	0.00	300.00	0.00	1,760.00	1,760.00
MACUNGIE, GRACE-1027	285.00	500.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
OLD ZIONSVILLE, ZION-1028	165.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16,722.63	17,200.00
EAST SALISBURY, JERUSALEM-1030	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
SUMMIT LAWN, ST. ANDREW-1031	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	800.00	0.00
BREINIGSVILLE, ST. PAUL-1032	0.00	2,040.00	0.00	20,100.00	20,100.00	20,100.00
MACUNGIE R. D., ST. PETER-1033	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
WEST SALISBURY, JERUSALEM-1034	1,000.00	200.00	1,400.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. MICHAEL/NATIVITY-1037	5,396.00	0.00	700.00	35,281.00	42,987.04	37,905.00
LEHIGH DISTRICT, MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	22,687.00	8,055.85	12,723.00	190,568.00	281,868.96	250,475.00

Total churches responding

25

25

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

NORTHERN LEHIGH	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
BATH, ST. JOHN-5001	0.00	0.00	200.00	4,000.00	4,179.00	4,000.00
CATASAUQUA, HOLY TRINITY-5002	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,000.00	14,000.00	10,200.00
CHERRYVILLE, HOPE-5004	1,089.05	0.00	180.00	38,500.00	38,500.00	39,655.00
COPLAY, ST. JOHN-5005	795.00	2,499.84	0.00	11,000.00	11,000.04	11,250.00
EMANUELSVILLE, EMMANUEL-5006	1,572.00	0.00	200.00	33,500.00	33,500.00	28,500.00
HEIDELBERG, HEIDELBERG-5007	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,750.00	0.00
SLATEDALE, HOLY TRINITY-5008	0.00	200.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
KREIDERSVILLE, GOOD SHEPHERD-5010	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,004.00	5,000.00
LOWHILL TWNSP, MORGENLAND-5011	0.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
NAZARETH, ST. JOHN-5013	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
SCHNECKSVILLE, UNION-5014	3,280.68	1,000.00	2,100.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
NEW TRIPOLI, NEW LIFE-5015	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,094.00	1,754.00	0.00
NORTHAMPTON, HOLY TRINITY-5016	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
NORTHAMPTON, ZION-5017	3,635.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	8,400.00	0.00
NORTHAMP HOLY TRINITY SLOVAK-5018	375.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
SLATINGTON, ST. JOHN-5019	80.00	0.00	377.00	2,500.00	266.99	2,500.00
OREFIELD, JORDAN-5020	2,045.86	250.00	325.00	20,000.00	20,000.04	20,000.00
WEISENBERG TWP, WEISENBERG-5021	1,949.50	3,799.75	1,265.00	0.00	18,487.46	0.00
WEISENBERG TWP, ZIEGELS-5022	1,670.00	4,200.00	0.00	0.00	5,664.00	0.00
WHITEHALL, FAITH-5023	970.00	1,375.00	10.00	22,000.00	18,333.30	22,000.00
WHITEHALL, SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS-5024	3,381.00	875.00	991.16	0.00	14,232.00	17,534.00
BELFAST, GRACE-5026	1,455.00	600.00	470.00	4,600.00	4,600.00	4,600.00
WHITEHALL, ST. JOHN-5027	2,831.78	200.04	0.00	16,625.00	14,526.42	0.00
HECKTOWN, TRINITY-5028	214.00	500.00	335.00	17,000.00	17,000.00	0.00
KEMPTON, JERUSALEM (RED)-5029	0.00	0.00	300.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00
NORTHERN LEHGH VALLEY MISC.-5099	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	25,343.87	15,499.63	6,838.16	217,519.00	269,897.25	179,439.00

Total churches responding

26

26

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

POCONO	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
ALBRIGHTSVILLE, ST. PAUL-6001	0.00	900.00	0.00	0.00	5,208.00	5,200.00
APPENZELL, ST. MARK-6002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,989.00	0.00
BANGOR, TRINITY-6003	140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,537.00	0.00
BLAKESLEE, FAITH-6005	301.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	5,400.00
BRODHEADSVILLE, ZION UNITED-6006	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,200.00	0.00	6,000.00
SMITHFIELD, ST. PAUL-6007	0.00	0.00	1,390.00	0.00	7,000.00	7,000.00
DINGMANS FERRY, HOLY TRINITY-6008	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,600.00	4,000.00
EFFORT, ST. JOHN-6010	35.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
GOULDSBORO, GRACE-6011	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,900.00	2,900.00	2,900.00
GREELEY, ST. LUKE-6012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	194.00	0.00
HAMILTON SQUARE, CHRIST-6013	425.00	0.00	2,685.00	0.00	385.00	0.00
HAWLEY, ST. PAUL-6014	263.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	2,400.00
HONESDALE, ST. JOHN-6015	21.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
JOHNSONVILLE/PRINCE OF PEACE-6016	1,366.52	0.00	0.00	17,575.00	15,482.51	16,785.00
KRESGEVILLE, SALEM-ST. PAUL-6017	775.00	0.00	1,154.50	6,500.00	5,000.00	5,500.00
MINISINK HILLS, ST. MARK-6019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00
PEN ARGYL, ST. JOHN-6020	450.00	200.00	100.00	600.00	300.00	500.00
PLAINFIELD, ST. PETER-6021	244.00	0.00	1,020.20	0.00	15,999.96	16,000.00
SCOTRUN, ST. JOHN-6023	434.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,600.00	0.00
SHOHOLA, ST. JACOBI-6024	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,020.00	1,020.00
STONE CHURCH, CHRIST-6025	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00
STROUDSBURG, ST. JOHN-6026	1,934.00	30.00	1,410.00	0.00	8,000.00	0.00
TANNERSVILLE, ST. PAUL-6027	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,800.00	2,700.00
POCONO DISTRICT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	6,940.05	1,180.00	7,759.70	34,975.00	90,715.47	82,305.00

Total churches responding

24

24

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

SCHUYLKILL	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
ASHLAND, GOOD SHEPHERD-7001	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,419.00	3,550.00
AUBURN, ST. JOHN-7002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,528.00	0.00
FRACKVILLE, ZION-7003	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,320.00	5,300.00
FRIEDENSBURG, ST. JOHN-7004	25.00	254.00	0.00	0.00	4,482.00	5,000.00
ASHLAND, CHRIST. UNITED-7005	209.75	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	12,480.29	0.00
HEGINS, FRIEDENS-7006	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
PITMAN, ST. JAMES-7007	5,977.00	0.00	3,242.00	8,000.00	6,688.49	8,000.00
LLEWELLYN, FRIEDENS-7009	49.00	0.00	0.00	800.00	110.00	700.00
MINERSVILLE, ZION-7010	875.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,324.50	0.00
BUCK RUN, TRINITY-7012	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,200.00	2,200.00	2,200.00
ORWIGSBURG, ST. PAUL-7013	490.00	0.00	430.00	0.00	9,000.00	7,300.00
ORWIGSBURG RD, ZION-7014	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
PINE GROVE, ST. JOHN-7015	1,680.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,830.00	0.00
PINE GROVE, ST. PETER-7016	2,958.00	0.00	425.00	0.00	3,815.00	0.00
PINE GROVE RD 1, JACOBS-7017	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,100.00	2,410.50	0.00
PINE GROVE RD 1, OUTWOOD-7018	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,815.00	0.00
PINE GROVE, SALEM-HETZELS-7019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PORT CARBON, ST. PAUL-7020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,000.00
MIDDLEPORT, ST. PAUL-7021	630.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	480.00	480.00
POTTSVILLE, TRINITY-7022	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,214.46	0.00
RAVINE, ST. MATTHEW-7023	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00
REINERTON, ST. PETER-7024	570.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,680.00	0.00
SUMMER HILL, ST. PAUL-7027	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,610.54	2,000.00
TOWER CITY, ST. PAUL-7028	634.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	819.00	0.00
TREMONT, ST. JOHN-7029	309.00	0.00	0.00	400.00	400.00	400.00
VALLEY VIEW, TRINITY-7030	1,269.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,740.00	0.00
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, JERUSALEM-7033	1,387.00	175.00	2,385.00	14,000.00	12,220.45	14,000.00
SCHUYLKILL DISTRICT MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	19,062.75	429.00	6,482.00	50,800.00	99,087.23	51,730.00

Total churches responding

28

28

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

SCRANTON-WILKES BARRE	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
ARCHBALD, ST. LUKE-8001	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DUSHORE, SHEPHERD OF HILLS-8003	831.00	355.50	0.00	9,620.00	6,613.77	6,700.00
HOBBIIE, ST. JAMES-8004	835.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,550.00	0.00
POND HILL, ST. MARK-8005	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,650.04	0.00
KINGSTON, HOLY TRINITY-8006	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00
MOUNTAINTOP, ST. PAUL-8007	500.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	3,250.00	0.00
NANTICOKE, ST. JOHN-8008	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,408.00	0.00
ZENITH, ST. JAMES-8011	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
HUGHESTOWN, ST. PETER-8012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,254.00	0.00
SAYRE, ST. JOHN-8013	1,942.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00	2,588.00	0.00
NESCOPECK, FAITH UNITED-8016	469.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,550.00	5,000.00
SCRANTON, ST. PETER-8017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DALLAS, ST. PAUL-8018	2,387.86	600.00	3,698.05	14,753.00	14,753.00	14,328.00
TOWANDA, TRINITY-8019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,075.00	4,075.00
WILKES-BARRE, GOOD SHEPHERD-8020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
WILKES-BARRE, ST. JOHN-8022	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
WILKES-BARRE HGTS, ST. MARK-8023	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SCRANTON, ST. MATTHEW UNITED-8025	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,200.00	0.00
SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	7,014.86	955.50	5,698.05	24,873.00	58,891.81	30,103.00

Total churches responding

18

19

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

WEST BERKS	World	Homes &	Other	2021	2021	2022
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2021	2021	2021			
KNAUERS, ALLEGHENY-9001	2,020.00	0.00	0.00	15,300.00	15,300.00	15,300.00
BERN TOWNSHIP, BERN-9002	1,422.50	0.00	1,299.00	6,400.00	3,080.50	0.00
BERNVILLE, FRIEDENS-9003	893.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
BIRDSBORO, ST. MARK-9004	1,588.00	0.00	217.00	0.00	2,370.00	0.00
GEIGERTOWN, ST. JAMES-9005	3,565.00	100.00	0.00	5,000.00	3,739.50	5,000.00
GOUGLERSVILLE, TRINITY-9007	0.00	0.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00
GRILL, CHRIST-9008	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	700.00	0.00
JACKSONWALD, SCHWARZWALD-9009	795.00	0.00	0.00	10,868.00	10,868.00	10,868.00
LAURELDALE, CALVARY-9010	245.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,295.00	0.00
MOHNTON, ST. JOHN-9011	0.00	0.00	250.00	8,300.00	8,304.00	8,300.00
MT PENN, FAITH-9012	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,300.00	10,461.45	0.00
PLOWVILLE, ROBESON-9013	2,025.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00
READING, CHRIST-9015	1,030.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	4,999.95	0.00
READING, GOOD SHEPHERD-9016	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,800.00	4,800.00	0.00
READING, GRACE-9017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,466.71	0.00
READING, HOLY SPIRIT-9018	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,400.00	2,400.00
READING, HOPE-9019	1,030.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,055.00	3,000.00
READING, INCARNATION-9020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,200.00	0.00
READING, NATIVITY-9021	390.00	530.00	1,650.00	3,500.00	3,816.00	3,500.00
READING, PEACE-9022	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
READING, ST. JOHN-9024	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	25,000.00
READING, ST. LUKE-9025	45.00	0.00	225.18	0.00	1,400.00	1,500.00
READING, ST. MARK-9026	275.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,362.00	3,500.00
READING, ST. PAUL-9027	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,600.00	2,700.00
READING, TRINITY-9028	0.00	0.00	50,290.41	56,000.00	56,000.00	56,000.00
BETHEL, SALEM-9030	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,489.25	0.00
REIFFTON, REFORMATION-9031	2,755.00	0.00	200.00	20,000.00	20,687.07	0.00
ROBESONIA, ST. DANIEL-9032	2,568.96	0.00	250.00	0.00	13,800.00	13,800.00
ROBESONIA, TRINITY-9033	1,635.00	0.00	3,000.00	62,000.00	62,000.00	56,000.00
SHILLINGTON, GRACE-9035	3,338.31	0.00	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
SINKING SPRING, ST. JOHN-9036	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,387.79	0.00
STONY CREEK MILLS, BETHANY-9037	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,150.00	1,125.00	0.00
STOUCHSBURG, CHRIST-9038	1,407.00	346.12	692.26	0.00	400.00	0.00
WERNERSVILLE, TRINITY-9042	1,061.00	0.00	0.00	19,686.00	19,686.00	19,309.00
WEST LAWN, ADVENT-9043	6,140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	24,452.35	0.00
WEST READING, BETHANY-9044	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
WOMELSDORF, ZION-9045	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,700.00	0.00
WYOMISSING, ATONEMENT-9046	1,755.00	0.00	1,315.00	54,000.00	58,500.00	54,000.00
WYOMISSING, COMMON GROUND MINISTRIES-9047	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00
READING, HOPE'S TABLE - 9050	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
READING. COMMON GROUND RECOVERY MINISTRIES-9051	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
READING, HMONG COMMUNITY	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
WEST. BERKS MISC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL WEST. BERKS	35,983.77	976.12	59,388.85	292,104.00	407,245.57	291,877.00

Total churches responding

43

43

Note: Amounts above do not include benevolences sent directly to agencies.

**34th Annual Synod Assembly
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
June 4-5, 2021
Held Online**

2021 Synod Assembly Minutes

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Friday, June 4, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

OPENING WORSHIP. The 2021 Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), meeting electronically, began with gathering music at 1:45 p.m. and opening worship at 2:00 p.m. on June 4, 2021, the Rev. Christopher deForest, Bishop, preaching.

ASSEMBLY OPENING. Bishop deForest called the first plenary session of the assembly to order at 3:00 p.m. He stated the assembly theme, “Growing Young and Vital,” and introduced his partner in conducting the assembly, Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner. He explained that there were two electronic approaches to the assembly: (1) a YouTube livestream for visitors and (2) a Zoom meeting for registered voting members. He explained as well the way voting members could vote and indicate that they wished to speak. Bishop deForest asserted that a quorum was present and led the assembly in the Order for the Opening of a Synod Assembly.

ASSEMBLY PROGRAM, 2020 MINUTES. Although a proposed assembly program had been approved by the Synod Council and submitted to the assembly by means of the Bulletin of Reports, Vice President Edelman-Weiner explained that a revised agenda had been prepared and endorsed by the Executive Committee in order to allow time for Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to address the assembly, provide for a fifth ballot if needed, and give details concerning the speakers in the fourth plenary session. She asked if there was any objection to substituting the revised agenda for the original; no objection was made. On behalf of the Executive Committee the Rev. Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary, then presented the following resolution: *Resolved*, That the 2021 Synod Assembly Revised Agenda be adopted. The motion was adopted unanimously; the voting took place electronically.

Secretary Shankweiler reported that copies of the 2020 Assembly Minutes have been certified by the bishop and secretary and prepared for deposit in the archives, with the 2020 assembly minutes included on pages 74 to 94 of the 2021 Bulletin of Reports. He invited requests for the 2020 Minutes Book, which would become available in summer on a print-on-demand basis.

THANK-YOUS AND INTRODUCTIONS. Bishop deForest expressed the synod’s thanks to Ms. Edelman-Weiner; the members of the staff and Assembly Planning Team for bringing together this online assembly only seven and one half months after the 2020 October assembly; the election team headed by the Rev. Kenneth T. Melber Jr. with support from Edward C. Cool; synod staff members Eric Gombert, Sammy Kelly, Deacon Travis Woodfield, and the Rev. Lauren Wolfe Blatt for help with technology, communications, and production; Events Staging Productions, that is, Conrad Bartholomew and his team; Deborah Frey, the assembly’s registrar, and the other support staff members Laurie Christman and Deborah Skinner; the assembly worship team (Deacon Michael Krentz with the Rev. Chris Druckenmiller, the Rev. Deborah Taylor, and Bobby Siegfried); the creators of the Growing Young segments, i.e., the Rev. Lauren Applegate, the Rev. Rebecca Middeke-Conlin, and the Rev. Jennifer Hall; Linda Eroh and Dr. Donald Boyer of the Synod Council; and Daniel Raudenbush for planning the August 14 Ministry Laboratory (Min Lab) that is related to this assembly. He added thanks for the advice of the

Rev. Kurt Garbe, who had worked on assemblies prior to his retirement, and to the Rev. Dr. D. Michael Bennethum, the Rev. Rachael Dietz, Pastor Shankweiler, Ms. Edelman-Weiner, and the Rev. Samantha Drennan (for her help in planning the bishop's installation service of June 5).

Ms. Edelman-Weiner announced two special guests: Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on June 5 and Ms. Jodi Slattery, the ELCA's Executive for Governance, for both days of the assembly.

BISHOP'S REPORT. Bishop deForest presented his report as found in the Bulletin of Reports and added verbal comments.

- With prayer and a moment of silence he noted the death of the Rev. Debra A. North on June 1.
- He reported that he spoke at all nine mission district spring assemblies about his vision for the synod and, therefore, was intending to add specifics rather than a review of his basic points concerning that vision.
- He explained that over the next five years the synod will move forward in dealing with the three vital sign goals by forming action groups for each one by the end of summer 2021 so that they can begin functioning in fall. He solicited interest in serving on them and directed volunteers to contact Pastor Bennethum.
- The synod's website is being revised by Pastor Wolfe Blatt.
- In order to get to know the synod's rostered leaders better, beginning in July he will dedicate Monday afternoons for forty-minute sessions with pastors and deacons until all persons who wish such a meeting have had one.
- He is planning to hold three group meetings with retired pastors and deacons and ask them to consider serving in interim ministry.
- With her contract ending on July 31, he thanked Sammy Kelly for her service to the synod. He added that consideration is being given as to how the work that she has been doing should go forward.
- He affirmed that the synod seeks to follow Christ by healing the hurt, loving the land, and engaging the stranger with all of that ministry centered in Jesus Christ. He also affirmed that we are called to share one another's burdens.
- He challenged the synod with these questions: What are your vital signs? How has God inspired and empowered you to "heal the hurt," "love the land," and "engage the stranger"?

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS. A video was then shown that highlighted various ministries by synod congregations. Another video hosted by Pastors Applegate and Hall was shown concerning the idea of Growing Young; this video covered how the church can prepare its space and community for welcoming others.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS. Pastor Dietz, in her capacity as chairperson of the Nominating Committee, explained that there had been general calls for nominees, the approaching of specific persons, and a focusing on underrepresented groups. Nominees were sought for three positions: treasurer, Synod Council member, and churchwide assembly member. She explained that nominations could still be made from the floor with those nominating needing to supply biographical information.

Bishop deForest then opened the floor for additional nominations. The call for nominees for Synod Council in the categories of clergy, lay male, lay female, youth, and person of color/language other than English brought forth no additional nominations as compared to the nominations already presented by the Nominating Committee. Bishop deForest declared that nominations were closed for those positions.

The next call was for nominations for the 2022 churchwide assembly. The Rev. Nancy Moore proposed the name of Alvin Seller, but it was pointed out that his name was coming as a mission district nominee so that he would be elected *en bloc*. Pastor Hall nominated Pastor Drennan for the category of clergy.

The Rev. Anthony Pagotto nominated Madison Delucca for the position of young adult. The Rev. Susan Ruggles nominated Roger Ruggles in the category of lay male. Nominations for members of the 2022 churchwide assembly were then declared closed.

The final call for nominees was for the office of treasurer, for which office the Synod Council nominated Dr. Donald Boyer. No additional nominations were made, and the bishop declared nominations closed.

FIRST REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL. The Rev. Brandon Heavner, chairperson of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, explained the work of the committee, introduced its members, and indicated the deadline for submitting resolutions. He reported that one resolution had been received by the committee and proposes a recommendation to the ELCA.

FIRST BALLOT. Bishop deForest called upon Pastor Melber to introduce the first ballot. Pastor Melber spoke about the cases in which nominees are running unopposed and about the nominations made by the synod's mission districts. He moved, seconded by Josh Gullotta, that Bishop deForest, Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner, and the mission district nominees be elected *en bloc* as members of the 2022 churchwide assembly. The motion was adopted 288 in favor, one opposed. Therefore, Bishop deForest declared those persons elected:¹

- Christopher deForest (Churchwide Assembly, bishop)
- Kristen Edelman-Weiner (Churchwide Assembly, vice president)
- Rebecca Knox (Churchwide Assembly, clergy, nominated by the East Berks District)
- Susan Ruggles (Churchwide Assembly, clergy, nominated by the Bethlehem-Easton District)
- Linda Eroh (Churchwide Assembly, lay female, nominated by the Scranton-Wilkes Barre District)
- Deborah Reed (Churchwide Assembly, lay female, nominated by the Schuylkill District)
- Elise Wang (Churchwide Assembly, lay female, young adult, person of color and/or language other than English, nominated by the West Berks District)
- Jeffrey Gilbert (Churchwide Assembly, lay male, nominated by the Pocono District)
- Alvin Sellers (Churchwide Assembly, lay male, nominated by the Hazleton-Lehigh District)
- Christopher Williams (Churchwide Assembly, lay male, nominated by the Northern Lehigh Valley District)

Pastor Melber then moved that the following persons running unopposed be elected. His motion was seconded and adopted with 287 votes in the affirmative, five against. Bishop deForest then declared those persons elected:

- P. Wesley Poole (Synod Council, clergy)
- Spencer Steele (Synod Council, clergy)
- Cassandra Teter (Synod Council, youth, female)
- Daniel Tobey (Synod Council, youth, male)
- Thomas Engle (Churchwide Assembly, lay male)
- Mark Stana (Churchwide Assembly, lay male)
- James Marra (Churchwide Assembly, lay male)
- Nelson Quinones (Churchwide Assembly, clergy)
- Roger Ruggles (Churchwide Assembly, lay male)
- Donald Boyer (Treasurer)

The first ballot for lay female member of the Synod Council was then held.

¹ No nominee is listed for the Lehigh Mission District because by the time of the synod assembly that district had not yet met to select one. When that district did meet, they selected the Rev. Bradley Carroll.

END OF SESSION. Secretary Shankweiler gave the announcements, including a lighthearted presentation about Bishop deForest’s still being in his “honeymoon” period as synod bishop because of the short time between the 2020 and 2021 assemblies. The session ended at 4:55 p.m.

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Friday, June 4, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

SESSION OPENING. Following gathering music, Ms. Edelman-Weiner called the second plenary session to order at 7:00 p.m. The Worship Team provided opening devotions. With gratitude, Ms. Edelman-Weiner drew attention to a shawl that she was wearing from Faith, Blakeslee, and presented to her by Ruth Major on the occasion of an illness that Ms. Edelman-Weiner had dealt with.

PORTICO, GOOD SHEPHERD. With Healing the Hurt being a theme for this session, a video presentation about Portico was then shown; the video featured Barbara L. Debski (Portico’s regional representative for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod) and the Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann (President and Chief Executive Officer of Portico). Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network was featured next with a PowerPoint display presented by Carry Gerber, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Good Shepherd is the eighth largest rehabilitation provider in the country with more than seventy service locations.

ELECTIONS: FIRST BALLOT REPORT. Pastor Melber presented the report of the Elections Committee.

Report of the First Ballot for Lay Female for Synod Council

Total ballots cast: 283
Total legal ballots: 283
Total illegal ballots: 0
Required for election: 142

Elizabeth Leibenguth: 152
Katie Schnaath: 81
Scherelene Schatz: 50

Bishop deForest declared Elizabeth Leibenguth elected to the Synod Council.

The ballot for clergy members of the churchwide assembly and for lay female members of the churchwide assembly was then conducted.

CHURCHWIDE REPRESENTATIVE. Mr. James Jennings, a member of the ELCA’s Church Council and coming from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, greeted the assembly and introduced Jodi Slattery, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop, Governance, and the 2021 ELCA churchwide representative to the assembly.

In his own remarks, Mr. Jennings spoke about the concept of getting back to normal, noting that pre-COVID “normal” was not always successful. Because of COVID, in our congregations we now have new technology, ways of meeting needs, strategies to work in non-traditional ways, new approaches to dealing with shut-ins, and so forth, much of which can be used in a post-COVID world. We can emerge

with a new and improved church. The same is true for the ELCA's churchwide ministries, where these questions confront the church: What should we drop? What have we learned? What can we use? The Future Church Initiative gives the ELCA's churchwide expression a new organizational structure that is rooted yet relevant and sustainable. There is an emphasis on racism in response to the 2019 churchwide assembly and the unrest in our country. The church is at a critical moment and needs to consider how to build a new normal. Mr. Jennings then introduced Jodi Slattery, with whom he works in that she relates to the Church Council of the ELCA.

Ms. Slattery spoke about her personal church background and family. She thanked the synod for the \$843,174 given in the last year to the churchwide expression of the ELCA, making this one of the "most generous synods." She spoke about what is done with that money, including the ministries supported in this synod's territory: Common Ground, Wyomissing; Common Ground, Reading; and Hope's Table, Reading. She also reported about local beneficiaries through the COVID 19 Response Fund.

She spoke about the synod's support of World Hunger (e.g., Café Esperanza, Reading; the Easton Hunger Coalition), Lutheran Disaster Response (assisting in forty-nine countries), the ELCA Innovation Lab (which "enables us to learn"), the sharing of ideas through "Open Doors," and the ELCA Fund for Leaders (with three recipients from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in 2020: Cody Danner, Dillon Epler, and Mary Ann Farnsworth—all at United Lutheran Seminary). She reported about missionaries, Young Adults in Global Mission, and companion synods, including Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson (Tanzania), the Rev. Dr. Robert and Kathy Moore (Germany), Dr. Stephen and Bethany Friberg (Tanzania), and others. She mentioned expedited loans through the Mission Investment Fund and events planned for 2022, including a churchwide Youth Gathering. She highlighted persons from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod serving in the churchwide expression: the Rev. Cheryl Meinschein (Committee of Appeals), James Jennings (Church Council), and Pastor Bennethum (Director for Evangelical Mission in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod). She thanked Bishop deForest and the synod for having invited her to the assembly.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Donald Dillman presented the Report of the Treasurer. In addition to his printed report, he highlighted (a) the synod's receipt of a Paycheck Protection Payment loan, which meant that no staff members were terminated because of the pandemic and (b) the fact that in 2020 the synod received ninety-seven percent of the Mission Support that had been budgeted, in spite of that being a difficult year. Ms. Edelman-Weiner said that the financial leadership within the synod has been "incredible," involving Mr. Dillman as treasurer, Dr. Donald Boyer as chairperson of the Finance Committee and next treasurer, and Mr. Jennings on the ELCA's churchwide budget committee. She remarked that the synod is "in a good place and wants to stay there."

Both Ms. Edelman-Weiner and Pastor Shankweiler spoke with appreciation about Mr. Dillman's service, and Pastor Shankweiler extended an invitation to a dinner to mark Mr. Dillman's service as treasurer.

FINANCE COMMITTEE. Dr. Boyer reported for the Finance Committee and presented the Spending Proposal for fiscal year 2022 as printed in the Bulletin of Reports. He noted that the proposed plan was higher than the previous budget especially in regards to staff because of a proposed cost-of-living increase. He explained that at one point the ELCA was planning to change the way the Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) is paid but that no change is now anticipated.

The following resolution from the Synod Council was presented and voted on, being adopted on a vote of 258 Yes to seven No:

Resolved, That the 2022 spending proposal (February 1, 2022, to January 31, 2023) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2022 spending proposal no later than its January 2022

meeting, making any necessary adjustment to the proposal in light of both realistic anticipation of receipts and synod priorities (in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer with respect to the ELCA portion thereof).

In the discussion concerning the Spending Plan, the issue of the DEM position was discussed further. Pastor Bennethum explained that this position began in 2008 and was paid by the ELCA. Prior to the pandemic, there was the intention to give grants to the synods and have the synods themselves pay for these positions. Now for 2022 these positions will continue to be paid directly by the churchwide expression. Although the basic assumption is that the income and cost for this position are equal, there have been some minor, additional costs to the synod regarding health insurance.

GROWING YOUNG VIDEO. Another video segment from Pastors Applegate and Hall was based on the theme Growing Young. In the video, Kristen Kelley of Allegheny Lutheran Church spoke about their group that was begun before the pandemic.

ELECTIONS: SECOND BALLOT REPORT. Pastor Melber presented the report of the second ballot, which dealt with clergy members of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and with lay female members of the assembly.

Report of the Second Ballot for Churchwide Assembly (Clergy)

Total ballots cast: 257
Total legal ballots: 257
Total illegal ballots: 0
Required for election: 129

Rachael Dietz: 155
Charles Grube: 125
Anthony Pagotto: 84
Samantha Drennan: 80
Julie Osterhout: 69
Jenny Heavner: 64
Brandon Heavner: 64
Spenser Steele: 56
Bruce Osterhout: 53

Report of the Second Ballot for Churchwide Assembly (Lay Female)

Total ballots cast: 255
Total legal ballots: 255
Total illegal ballots: 0
Required for election: 128

Katie Schnaath: 182
Elizabeth Leibenguth: 175
Madison DeLuca: 166
Mary Rowe: 156
Ashley Teter: 147
Debra Obeid: 104

Bishop deForest declared Pastor Rachael Dietz elected and noted that Pastors Charles Grube, Anthony Pagotto, Samantha Drennan, and Julie Osterhout would advance to the next ballot.

He further declared Katie Schnaath, Elizabeth Leibenguth, Madison DeLuca, and Mary Rowe elected.

INTRODUCTIONS. The Rev. Rachael Dietz was called forth to introduce those rostered leaders new to the synod as well as those who retired or were celebrating major anniversaries:

Halle Kluever, candidate for Word and Sacrament ministry interviewing in this synod.

The Rev. Elizabeth Koerner, ordained April 23, 2021, serving St. John, Stroudsburg.

The Rev. Mary Laufer, retired October 1, 2020.

The Rev. Lee Diefenderfer, retired November 1, 2020.

The Rev. Kurt Garbe, retired December 31, 2020.

The Rev. Peggy Wuertele, retired December 31, 2020.

The Rev. Samuel Zeiser, retired December 31, 2020.

The Rev. Mark Wimmer, retired February 1, 2021.

A video was shown concerning the anniversaries of rostered leaders for 2021, which were listed in the Report of the Committee of Deans.

END OF SESSION ANNOUNCEMENTS. Pastors Dietz and Shankweiler made announcements about coming events, and a video was shown about Deacon Diana Pelletier and her years in therapy because of a car accident, now leading her to use an exoskeleton, “Eddie,” and goal to walk a mile to raise \$5,280. The session ended at 8:57 p.m.

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Saturday, June 5, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

SESSION OPENING. Gathering music preceded the session opening for thirty minutes; the opening devotions were provided by the Worship Team.

VIDEO CONCERNING CARE OF CREATION. Bishop deForest introduced a video that featured the Rev. David Rowe and showed a variety of congregational ministries dealing with food and with the stewardship of creation: Trinity, Hecktown, gathering fresh food; Advent, West Lawn, offering a “library” that is a small food pantry; Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven, having a pantry box with food items; Christ, Conyngham, providing a transportation ministry; United Proclamation of the Gospel, Bethlehem, making mats for homeless persons from plastic bags; Christ’s United, Ashland, giving food trays to people not able to come to church. What is your vital sign today concerning the care of creation?

UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY. The United Lutheran Seminary’s president, the Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, greeted the assembly by video. In addition to a general thank-you to the synod for its partnership with the seminary, he also thanked the Pocono Mission District and the congregations following that district’s lead in providing monthly support for the seminary.

LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES AND LAMPa. Bishop deForest spoke of the theme Vital Signs for Now and its second component, Loving the Land. “Loving the land can mean so many ministries and missions to serve God and the people God loves—all of us for whom Christ died.” He introduced two of the synod’s ministry partners that help to Heal the Hurt and Engage the Stranger but which also “offer us opportunities to Love the Land”: Lutheran Congregational Services (LCS) and Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Pennsylvania (LAMPa). A video was shown with Julia Menzo of LCS speaking about assistance with flooding and with the Rev. Inge Williams speaking for LAMPa.

VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT; REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL. Kristen Edelman-Weiner spoke about barn swallows, her favorite sign that spring is returning but which were delayed. She said she was failing to hold the “tension of the opposites,” i.e., the idea that opposites can co-exist. Just because the swallows did not return was no reason to miss everything else. As a church are we ready to move into a new normal? The swallows might not be back, but what about the other signs of spring? We can make good decisions as we hold the tension. She acknowledged those who do that: (a) presidents of congregational councils and other council members, (b) clergy leaders in union churches where they deal with two denominations, (c) interim pastors, “dropping in when confusion and grief abounds,” (d) all who shepherd congregations in changing times. “The swallows finally came back. We can do this. Hold the tension!”

SECOND REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL. Pastor Heavner presented the Second Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, explaining that a resolution was received from Deacon Deborah Matern Graf, and Pastors Lauren Wolfe Blatt, Deborah Taylor, Carl Shankweiler, Lauren Applegate, Colleen Cox, Kenneth T. Melber Jr., Cindy White, Larry D. Laine, Nancy L. Moore, Deborah K. Scheffey, Michael Scholtes, Terrence M Walsh, and the Northern Lehigh Mission District of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

RESOLUTION TO INCLUDE NON-BINARY AND GENDER FLUID PERSONS IN THE OFFICIAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH

This resolution seeks to amend constitutional provision 5.01. of the ELCA constitution and to add to 5.01. language which commits the ELCA to the inclusion of non-binary and gender fluid individuals. By expanding the gender/sex language to specifically include non-binary and gender fluid members voting at ELCA assemblies, synod assemblies, conferences, and other sub-units within synods, the ELCA effectively opens the way for gender fluid and non-binary individuals who are marginalized by gendered language and requirements to become full participants in the life of the church.

Whereas, as Christ’s body, we gather to do God’s work in all three expressions of the church. As such, we are called by the Spirit to do so with care and concern for one another. Paul writes, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.... For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many...that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-14, 25, NRSV).

Whereas, we live in a constantly adapting and changing world where an increasing percentage of the population identifies as non-binary or gender fluid; we continue to seek to heal past hurts, welcome strangers, and be open to hearing the voices of all members of Christ’s body.

Whereas, gender is not a spectrum or binary, but instead a constantly forming and changing cycle, which is dynamic and celebrated by God. We recognize that gender fluid and non-binary persons are among those individuals who are marginalized and oppressed. Gender fluid, non-binary church members and leaders are underrepresented in our congregations, synods, and in the churchwide

ELCA. They are also not recognized due to the gender identification requirements for voting members.

Whereas, the ELCA constitution includes provisions 5.01.A16. through 5.01.F19. in commitment to diversity, it is understood and appreciated that the voting procedures which identify gender, were designed to include women's voices in the 1970's and helped to open the way for participation of women at a time when their voices were often marginalized and underrepresented. These voting protections which identify gender have made great progress and have served their purpose well, exemplified by a church where the presiding bishop and ELCA secretary, as well as thirty of the sixty-five synod bishops, and many ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, congregational leaders, and members are women. These women are themselves evidence that promoting gender diversity was successful, and as such, this memorial seeks to amend the current language, so that it may include others who often have little or no voice in church matters, and who are currently marginalized by binary language, reporting, and requirements based on the binary gender model. While ethnic, racial, and age diversity are addressed specifically and the ELCA acknowledges its commitment to creating, growing and supporting diversity in all areas of the church, the constitution does not address diversity or commit itself to ending marginalization and oppression of people who identify themselves as non-binary or gender fluid.

Whereas, ELCA constitutional provision 5.01. specifically states, "Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men, and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall include both men and women."

Whereas, we recognize and appreciate the effort that changed the gender quota from 50% male and 50% female, to 45% male and 45% female, in that it infers inclusion of persons who do not identify with the binary construct. However, an inference at inclusion does not open the doors for full participation in church life, for individuals who are both underrepresented and marginalized in the ELCA and the broader culture.

Whereas, several constitutional provisions in 5.01. explicitly state the ELCA's commitment to inclusion:

"5.01.A16. This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.

"5.01.C00. The term, "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English," shall be understood to mean African American, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church's commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.

"5.01.E19. The Church Council shall establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16. The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.

"5.01.F19. It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults.

The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.”

It is clear that those individuals who identify as non-binary or gender fluid are omitted from not only the right to participate as voting members, they are also omitted from the ELCA’s lengthy commitment to inclusion.

Resolved, That the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to expand gender/sex language beyond using binary terms for church members representing groups, congregations, conferences and other subunits within synods, and synods at gatherings in any of the three expressions of the church by changing section 5.01. in order to expand the gender quota requirement therein, and explicitly grant access and inclusion of non-binary and gender fluid individuals in full participation of church life, and to expand the ELCA's commitment to inclusiveness in Chapter 5 of the ELCA constitution to include a specifically stated commitment to inclusion of non-binary and gender fluid persons in the business of the church, including as voting members.

The response of the Committee on Reference and Counsel is that the following resolution be adopted:

Resolved, That the proposed "Resolution to Include Non-Binary and Gender Fluid Persons In The Official Life Of The Church" be sent without prejudice to the 2022 Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a memorial from this synod.

Pastor Dietz spoke about the voting process concerning resolutions. Linda Sepeda spoke in favor of the resolution but wondered how the number of persons covered could be measured because not everyone is out in the open. Kelly Brooks spoke in favor but questioned wording in the fourth Whereas. Rene Rodriguez spoke against the resolution because the terminology was unclear to him; he also questioned whether the church would end up with four categories and how the final practice would be. The Rev. Deborah Taylor spoke in favor and wanted to make it clear that people who are gender fluid belong in this church. Lisa Traugott spoke in favor but was also concerned about various age groups. The Rev. William Zimmerman observed that by sending this resolution “without prejudice” still assumed some level of approval. Kristen Cunningham spoke in favor but wanted to remove gender requirements entirely. Rene Rodriguez again spoke in opposition on the basis of remaining unclarity and the issue of how to implement the desired changes. The Rev. Samantha Drennan spoke in favor, stating that a vote in favor is necessary if we are serious about moving ahead. (A person was recognized but could not establish a Zoom connection.)

Terry Walsh moved to amend the committee’s response by replacing “without prejudice” with “with enthusiastic approval.” Kim Truebenbach seconded this motion. Ben Miller observed that ideally he would like this wording but that it is difficult to say that something is adopted in an “enthusiastic” way before we know the vote.

The amendment to replace “without prejudice” with “with enthusiastic approval” was then adopted on a vote of 195 Yes to 108 No. The vote on the Reference and Counsel recommendation as amended resulted in an affirmative vote, 229 Yes to 73 No. The motion passed.

BEAR CREEK CAMP. Collin Groomes, Executive Director of Bear Creek Camp, made the camp’s report, stating that the camp was again planning a summer session.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY. Pastor Shankweiler drew the assembly’s attention to the Report of the Secretary and the Report of the Synod Council, both of which were in the Bulletin of Reports. On behalf of the Synod Council he presented the following resolution:

Resolved, That the following bylaw addition be presented to the 2021 Synod Assembly for action:

BLS10.01. An in-person, electronic, or telephone meeting of the Synod Council may be called by (a) the Synod Council itself by taking action at any given meeting to set a future date on which to meet again; (b) the bishop, (c) the vice president, or (d) any third of the members of the council. Although notice of at least two weeks should be provided if the timeliness of the projected business allows, there is no minimum time required for notification provided that all council members currently within the synod's territory have been notified prior to the meeting.

The bylaw was approved on a vote of 267 Yes to 6 No.

GROWING YOUNG VIDEO. Another video by Pastors Applegate and Hall was shown, “Growth Seekers.”

A point of order was raised concerning the voting on the Reference and Counsel resolution after it had been amended, the claim being that no call for discussion was made. The bishop ruled that speaking or objecting could have been done at that time.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE. Pastor Shankweiler presented the report of the Constitution Committee, which recommended the following addition to bylaw BLS7.21.c.:

Regardless of how many voting members a congregation is otherwise allotted, that congregation may have an additional lay voting member as long as at least one of the voting members from that congregation is a person under the age of thirty or a person of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, it being understood that any such additional lay voting members should not count towards the requirement that at least 60% of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons.

The addition was approved on a vote of 237 Yes to 46 No.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES. Sammy Kelly, Director of Youth and Family Ministries, made a report of her work by means of a video presentation. Bishop deForest spoke of the energy and vitality that Ms. Kelly brought to the work of the Youth, Young Adult, and Family Ministry Team working in conjunction with the Faith Formation Team and thanked her for her work.

ELECTIONS: THIRD BALLOT REPORT. Pastor Melber presented the report of the third ballot, which dealt with clergy members of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Report of the Third Ballot for Churchwide Assembly (Clergy)

Total ballots cast: 289
Total legal ballots: 289
Total illegal ballots: 0
Required for election: 145

Charles Grube: 179
Samantha Drennan: 150
Anthony Pagotto: 132

Julie Osterhout: 101

Bishop deForest declared Pastors Grube and Drennan elected and explained that this ballot concluded the elections for the churchwide assembly.

END OF SESSION ANNOUNCEMENTS. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Pastor Shankweiler, and Ms. Edelman-Weiner made the concluding announcements. The session ended at 10:30 a.m.

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Saturday, June 5, 2021, 10:45 a.m.

SESSION OPENING. After the playing of “gathering music,” the fourth session began at 10:45 a.m. with a recorded devotional segment.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA. Ms. Edelman-Weiner explained that this final plenary session would focus on the third vital sign, Engage the Stranger. She said that this sign connects well with the Women of the ELCA, whose synodical president, Lenna Harris, addressed the assembly by video on behalf of this “community of women.”

LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES. Kristin Witte addressed the assembly on behalf of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (L.I.R.S.), another partner that Ms. Edelman-Weiner explained helps Lutherans to engage the stranger. Ms. Witte expressed gratitude that L.I.R.S. was included in the assembly’s agenda. She stated that we are called to be prophets and to build relationships. She explained that L.I.R.S. was founded in 1939. Between her own verbal presentations, she showed a video. She said that next year there will be the need to resettle 125,000 refugees and that it is “time to reopen our doors.” She thanked the synod for “your generosity” and spoke about “desperate people,” such as the Afghans who helped the United States military.

COMPANION SYNOD PROGRAM. The Rev. Michele Kaufman, convenor of the synod’s Companion Synod and Global Partnerships Team, spoke by video about the synod’s four international partners, explaining that “these relationships are concrete expressions” of our fellowship within the Lutheran World Federation. The synod’s four companions are the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Slovenia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina/Uruguay, and the South Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. She explained that while she and her husband, the Rev. Wayne Kaufman, co-chaired the Saxony committee for twelve years, Bishop deForest asked her to “bring our companion synod teams together as we move forward.” She spoke about how involvement with these companion churches helps participants to “experience the church in a new and exciting way.” She encouraged people to contact her to become involved and thanked Pastor Garbe, who served for years as the synod staff liaison for this work. Ms. Edelman-Weiner also thanked Pastor Garbe for building relationships for us around the world.

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES. Pastor Dietz then presented the proposed compensation guidelines for pastors and deacons for 2022, pointing to them in the Bulletin of Reports. The “2022 Minimum Compensation Guidelines: Rostered Pastors 2022 Minimum Salary Guidelines” were then approved by a vote of 281 Yes to 6 No. The “Rostered Deacons 2022 Minimum Salary Guidelines” were approved by a vote of 277 Yes to 7 No.

GROWING YOUNG VIDEO. The final video by Pastors Applegate and Hall was then shown. The issue raised was that Abraham and Sarah welcomed God’s messengers, leading us to ask, “What are you doing to notice and respond to the needs of your neighbors?”

PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON. Ms. Edelman-Weiner expressed the synod’s honor in having Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton present for part of the assembly as well as Bishop deForest’s installation. Presiding Bishop Eaton then addressed the assembly by explaining that this was her first visit to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. With the ELCA’s being in existence for thirty-five years, that “qualifies us as a Millennial church.” She asked how do we “engage people who don’t know that they need Jesus, or the Jesus they think they know isn’t the Jesus of the Gospel?”

She admitted that the trend lines are not favorable. How can the church be true and reach people who are new, young, and diverse when the church itself is growing older and less diverse? Yet she asserted that “the Spirit is active in *each* of us—all of us together.”

She showed a very compelling video about a woman who felt abandoned and alone. We are a welcoming church. We are also a thriving church rooted in tradition. She said that it is “fantastic” that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod has four companion synods and noted that globally “most Lutherans are people of color and younger.” She asserted as well that the Lutheran tradition has “nothing to do with culture and cuisine.” We have the *Small Catechism* and other resources. “How do we connect with people?”

She observed that the ELCA’s three expressions are difficult to explain. We depend on each other because one expression alone “can’t do it.” She spoke of the ELCA’s priorities, including the goal to engage one million new people by the end of this decade. She explained that this has to happen in congregations “because that’s where the people are.”

She said that this goal lines up with the synod’s work. “‘Love the Land’—God called creation very good” even before humans were created. We need to “Engage the Stranger.” She said that she is “thrilled” that this synod is “working on all of these things” and expressed her thanks.

Bishop deForest thanked Presiding Bishop Eaton for taking part in the plenary session and called her “a great example of growing young.” He asserted that the churchwide expression of the ELCA can help but that the synod can lead, too, in trying things that can become gifts to the whole church. He lamented that too often synods “functioned in silos.”

UNFINISHED BUSINESS. Bishop deForest asked if anyone had any unfinished business to present; no one raised any issues.

PREVIEW OF AUGUST 14 MINISTRY LABORATORY. Ms. Edelman-Weiner spoke about the Ministry Laboratory (MinLab) to be held at the Lutheran Center on August 14 and introduced Daniel Raudenbush of Trinity Lutheran Church, Kutztown, who is leading the planning for this event. He explained that if the synod had held an in-person assembly, there would have been time and opportunity for congregations to highlight some of their important ministries. That sharing will now take place on August 14. He introduced a video segment about the MinLab and invited congregations to “bring your gift and share it with the whole synod,” pointing to the synod’s website as the place to request a display area and/or to register for this event.

END OF SESSION. Bishop deForest extended his thanks to the many people who took part in presenting the assembly. Pastor Shankweiler gave the closing announcements. The assembly was

adjourned at 12:25 p.m., following which the bishop led the assembly in the Order for the Closing of an Assembly.

BISHOP deFOREST'S INSTALLATION. At 3:00 p.m. that same afternoon Bishop Christopher deForest was installed as the bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in a modest service held at the Lutheran Center. This event was followed by a small dinner at Muhlenberg College. The strong limit on the number of people in attendance was due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary

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