



# SYNOD NEWS



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

## *FriEDEN'S: An Amazing Garden Story*

A few weeks after the lockdown in the spring of 2020, I called a neighbor in town who had a garden in her front yard. It's Shartlesville, and the PA Dutch are used to their yards looking \*just so,\* so I knew this was a brave woman who loved gardening vegetables more than public opinion. I also knew she didn't have room for pumpkins in her small yard, so I called and proposed we plant some viney crops up on our church property. She agreed and even had the seeds, gardening skills, and ideas, so after consultation with council, the garden was born. We sent our crop to the neighboring UCC congregation's food pantry, and with the excess had physically- distant free produce giveaways.

In 2021, we expanded the garden by half, to about 50 by 75 feet. We watered each plant via a recycled gallon milk jug with a pinprick in the bottom. The plants were happy, but our backs were not. It took 45 minutes to an hour to water all the jugs, which we did nearly every day because the garden is in full sun. The black plastic we used for weed suppression became a slip-and-slide while we irrigated.

In 2022, we were able to install a drip irrigation system that did not require filling milk jugs and weed suppression fabric that was not slippery. The fabric required using a blow torch to make holes for planting but will be able to be used for multiple years. The irrigation only required turning on the spigot and letting it run for several hours, which was a true God-send because we had some unexpected health issues on the garden team that limited our volunteer force! It was an extraordinarily dry summer, so the grant came just in time.

This past summer we had 21 people volunteer in the garden, took produce to 5 food pantries or senior centers, including Cafe Esperanza in Reading, and welcomed 29 people into the garden at a joint VBS. Not only are we feeding our neighbors with free, fresh, pesticide-free produce, but we are also getting to know our neighbors, developing new connections in the congregation among volunteers, teaching children about food insecurity and the joy of gardening, and passing on agricultural wisdom.

Submitted by Pastor Inge Williams

SYNOD  
ASSEMBLY



GOING  
BEYOND  
DEATH  
TO LIFE

JUNE  
1-3

*What's happening at Kalahari?*

- Plenaries full of important decisions like the next Vice President of the Synod and the next Secretary.
- Small group breakouts with important and timely topics like small rural ministry, growing young, anti-racism, innovative worship, and more...
- Vibrant worship featuring Agape (David Scherer) and spoken word poet, Joe Davis.
- Free time activities and gatherings.
- And an incredible guest preacher for our festival worship (announcement coming soon.)

*We're hard at work planning  
this incredible event!*



SO, LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER,  
RECHARGE, WORSHIP, AND ENGAGE IN  
THE BUSINESS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.