

2023 BULLETIN OF REPORTS

ASSEMBLY

JUNE 1—3, 2023

Kalahari Resort

Pocono Manor



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD
of the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



36th Annual Synod Assembly
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
June 1-3, 2023

2023 Synod Assembly Program (05/26)

Thursday, June 1, 2023

5:00 - 6:00 PM Meal Break

6:15 - 7:15 PM Plenary Session One

Introduction
Order for Opening
Adoption of the Agenda
Words of Welcome, Leadership/Support Roles
"Going Beyond ... 1:1"
Elections - Nominations from the Floor
Lutheran Refugee and Immigration Service
Racial Justice Task Force
Joe Davis & Dave Scherer
Announcements

7:30 - 9:00 PM Festival Worship

Friday, June 2, 2023

8:45 - 12:30 PM Plenary Session Two

Opening Worship
Women of the ELCA
"Going Beyond Death to Life"
Constitution Committee
Committee on Reference & Counsel 1
Growing Young
Report of Bishop
United Lutheran Seminary
Report of the Treasurer
Presentation of 2024 Spending Proposal

Mission Interpreters
ELCA World Hunger
Bishop Michael Girlinghouse Keynote Part 1
Director For Evangelical Mission Introduction
Joe Davis & Dave Scherer
Announcements

12:30 - 1:30 PM Meal Break

2:00 - 5:30 PM Workshops, Ministry Share Fair, and Vitality Cafe

Choir Rehearsal TBD between 1:30 & 3:00 p.m.

5:30 - 6:30 PM Meal Break

7:00 - 9:00 PM Plenary Session Three

Joe Davis & Dave Scherer
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Pennsylvania
ELCA Representative
Committee on Reference & Counsel 2
Bear Creek Camp
Meet Election Candidates - VP
Prayer & Elections
Announcements

Saturday, June 3, 2023

8:45 - 12:00 PM Plenary Session Four

Worship with Bishop deForest & Community Choir
LGBTQ+ Task Force
Election Results
Committee on Reference & Counsel 3
Bishop Michael Girlinghouse Keynote Part 2
Good Shepherd Rehabilitation
Portico Benefits
New Clergy, Retirements, 50th Anniversaries
Action on Compensation Guidelines
Ministry Moment - Hope's Table
Joe Davis & Dave Scherer
Announcements

12:00 - 1:00 PM Meal Break

1:30 - 3:00 PM Plenary Session Five

Joe Davis & Dave Scherer

Bishop Michael Girlinghouse Keynote Part 3

Report of the Secretary

Lutheran Congregational Services and Disaster Recovery Update

Installation: Newly Elected Deans, Synod Council Members and Officers

Unfinished Business

Thank Yous

Order for Closing an Assembly

REPORT OF THE BISHOP for 2022-23

(April 14, 2023)

*For as the new heavens and the new earth,
which I will make,
shall remain before me, says the Lord,
so shall your descendants and your name remain.
From new moon to new moon,
and from sabbath to sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
says the Lord. [Isaiah 66:22-23]*

God is doing a new thing, in us and through us. This is exciting, and challenging. Change is hard, and all of us feel the loss and grief, the strain and struggle that comes with God's promise to take us "beyond death to life." But along with God's promise to lead us, is the promise to never leave us. And as you see in the scripture above, God is also promising to leave no one out, and to not forget who we are, where we come from, and the best of what we bring from our past.

And so, we continue in our Lutheran legacy. We build on our local history, foundations, and connections. We are guided and inspired by those with deep experience, skills, and passion to follow Christ – including our deacons, pastors, and lay leaders, all called to their essential work and roles in congregations, organizations, work and home vocations. And we are open to seeing and learning from the many ways – every day, in every part of our synod, and in every person – in which our Lord is "making all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

GRATITUDE FOR PRAYER, SUPPORT AND SERVICE

In the Fall, I suffered from a strep infection that attacked my back and my aortic heart valve, causing great pain and leading to open heart surgery on November 23, followed by six weeks of recovery. I am so grateful for the many prayers and expressions of concern and support I received from individuals and congregations, throughout that time, even to today – it has made all the difference. I was also blessed by our Synod Office Staff, who stepped up to cover challenges and keep the synod running smoothly. They were also greatly supported by the Synod Council, under the strong leadership of Synod Vice President Kristen Edelman Weiner. Because of their commitment and dedication, I was able to return to office by mid-January and pick up on the work that was still well underway.

Continuing in thanksgiving, I also wish to acknowledge three leaders who have made transitions or are scheduled to leave office by this Synod Assembly Meeting:

Pastor Michael Bennethum retired in October 2022 from his position as Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM). Mike was called to be our Synod's first DEM in 2009, and went on to serve in that role for more than 13 years, with imagination, deliberation, collaboration, wisdom, and faith. He accepted my offer to stay on as DEM as I took office in 2021. As a new bishop, I could not have had a better advisor – and he continues being available to advise me, our staff, and congregational leaders, even in his retirement, even while he makes himself available to serve the whole church in a variety of ways. Mike, this synod and the entire church owes you a deep debt of gratitude! Thank you, my friend, colleague and mentor.

Pastor Carl Shankweiler is completing his second and final term as Secretary of our Synod and Synod Council. Carl has served the synod and the national church in many different positions throughout his career. Currently, he serves and loves working as pastoral leader for his two congregations – Trinity, Buck Run and Zion, Frackville – as well as being our part-time Associate of the Bishop supporting the great people and congregations of the Hazleton-Lehigh Mission District. This June's Assembly meeting will hear the last report of Carl as Secretary, including his famously clever Announcements and tributes at the end of each Plenary Session. But it shows Carl's level of devotion to his work and to his successor, that he plans to take time off in June, July and August, especially to help the new Secretary get up to speed in the office. I have to say, that Carl has gotten me out of many a jam. He has taken my phone call at almost any hour, and is always ready to jump in with advice and action, with honesty and with humor too. Carl, I value especially our times visiting congregations in transition, helping them to have hope, even when pastors are scarce. He is frequent to point out the fact that, while I am a ray of sunshine, seeing the glass more than half full – Carl keeps folks grounded, understanding that the glass might not only be more than half empty – it may have a hole in it! Carl thank you for all you've done, all you do, and for being always you!

Vice President Kristen Edelman Weiner is also completing her term in office this June and finishing up her time as VP; and she too will be very missed, at the least because of her inspiring messages each year at Synod Assembly – especially the way she encouraged her fellow lay persons to step into roles of leadership and share their skills and wisdom, following their own baptismal calls to lead and serve. She introduced many of us to the concept of the “three expressions of the church” – the national church, the synod, and the congregation – and how laity take an essential and unassailable leadership role, distinct from their partners who are bishops, staff, and clergy. But Kristen's contributions go far beyond Synod Assembly. Early on, Kristen traveled across the synod to build relationships with congregations and leaders, and listen to their concerns and ideas, which she brought back to the bishops and synod councils and staff she has worked with. She never hesitated to step up and step in when there was a need that her role as VP could help make better. She always paid attention to what was being said, who had need to speak, and who seemed as though they could not speak or make their voice heard. She has challenged me to learn and grow as a bishop and as a leader who also listens and lifts up all people, especially the laity. And what most people do not know – she has also been a national leader and mentor, helping to train and support Vice Presidents across the country. During the pandemic particularly, she convened the VPs together monthly on Zoom to support and encourage each other. And she did all this while maintaining and rightly prioritizing an active “ministry in daily life” as wife, mom, worker and leader, professionally and as volunteer in and across her community. Kristen, thank you for your passion and care, your wisdom and strength, your clear head and your big heart, for the lasting legacy you leave with the Synod Council members you have led and mentored, for the many election sessions you've facilitated for congregations who were voting-in new pastors, and for your incredible knowledge of the “Roberts Rules” that have guided Councils and Assemblies, bishops, lay leaders, pastors and deacons – all in service to God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the way, the truth, and the life.

UPDATE ON “VITAL SIGN GOALS”

These three leaders – Mike, Carl, and Kristen – are among those who have kept our focus on the living Lord – the one who shows us the way, with his life, death, resurrection and as-

cension – to GO BEYOND DEATH TO LIFE. This is the “vital sign” that keeps us moving forward, even though we face loss and grief, and the fact that our old ways, ways that used to work so well, are working less effectively than they once did. They have encouraged us in GROWING YOUNG and in GAINING STRENGTH – through their work with youth, young adults and families; the starting of new ministries and worshipping communities; and their work with congregations seeking to revitalize or close with faith and meaning, honoring their past by blessing the future.

Here's an update on all three of the “lanes” on our Synod highway – our VITAL SIGN GOALS:

Growing Young

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, and equipping diverse leaders so that faithful young people can change our world.

Almost exactly one year ago, **Stacey Burke** – a talented lay person of deep faith, organizational skills and commitment – assumed the new part-time role as our “Growing Young Coordinator.” She has done an exceptional job of bringing together congregations, youth leaders, and leaders of all kinds, to coordinate ideas, strategies and their common values. She is now putting together “Sow Sessions,” which build community and power-up people to take Growing Young to the next level. Stacey will present a report at Assembly 2023, offer a workshop and have a table at our Ministry Share Faire, so stop by to learn more.

Gaining Strength

To review: 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 three 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 bring these points to life, our Synod Council in January voted to increase the hours of two of our part-time Coordinating staff members: **Debbie Skinner** as Mission Support Coordinator, and **Laurie Christman** as Leadership Support Coordinator, so that they would be more available to support congregations, pastors and deacons, and the Synod Council to improve communication and to work with congregational stewardship, congregations in transition or seeking a new pastor, and keeping our records and information up to date.

In these same directions, two synod staff will take leading roles: **Pastor Rachael Dietz**, our Executive Associate for Leadership; and **Deacon Kat Tigerman**, our new Director of Evangelical Mission, who just came on board in April 2023. They will continue to work on:

- **Our Candidacy process** – Rachael, working with me and Kat, will be reaching out across the synod to encourage those who are considering a call to ministry.

- **A new “Gaining Strength Cohort”** – 11 Pastors in our synod in Spring 2022 became the first cohort of pastors in an 18-month process of growth, mutual support, skill development, and spiritual enrichment, all of which they have shared with their congregations and with other colleagues and communities in NEPS. By this fall, we will be ready to start a new Cohort, who will be trained and supported by these 11 colleagues, and by **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. **Deacon Kat Tigerman** will work alongside them and help spread the benefits across our synod. The goal is to reach at least 60 pastors by 2025.

Going Beyond Death to Life

This Vital Sign Goal is more than just the Theme of this year’s Synod Assembly. The vision is to help every congregation to understand and embrace their situation and their purpose, so that they can live well and serve well, and be better ready when the time comes to end well – leaving a lasting, faithful, purposeful legacy.

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.

Deacon Travis Woodfield, our Director of Congregational Legacy and Purpose, is working with me and with Synod Council, to move in several directions:

- By summer 2023, we plan to assemble a list of legal and real estate experts to recommend for congregations who need these professional services.
- By fall 2023, working with a team of pastors, deacons and lay persons, we will have an updated collection of resources for closing/merging/consolidating churches.
- By early 2024, we want to be ready to deploy “legacy and purpose teams,” made up of retired clergy, lay persons and other expert outside partners, to walk alongside those congregations in this important work, guiding them in spiritual and practical matters.
- By late summer 2023, we hope to have better guidelines for helping congregations in transition with finding supply pastors, and setting good boundaries so that those supply pastors are properly shared and treated. We will set these guidelines by working closely with both the pastors and congregations involved. **Stacey Burke**, as Supply Coordinator, will take the lead in bringing this Working Group together.

UPDATES ON OTHER VITAL PROJECTS

Supporting and connecting across all three Vital Sign Goals – here’s an update on some important projects and plans in process or coming 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 training and generating new SALMs was suspended several years ago, having become too difficult to run and supervise.

In January, our Synod Council authorized the appointment of a one-year contract position as “SALM Launch Coordinator.” They approved **Pastor Jira Albers** to this position. Pastor Albers is completing the research phase this month, and with input from our nine Mission District Deans, from Synod Council and other lay representatives from congregations, we are on track to begin the program by the start of 2024.

“Vital-Sign Restart Tour.” With our new DEM, **Deacon Kat Tigerman**, and a new Synod Vice President taking office following this Synod Assembly – we have an opportunity to step back, and follow in the footsteps of our predecessors – going out across the synod to meet and hear from lay leaders and congregational members, along with clergy and neighbors from other denominations and community organizations. Since my term as bishop began in the pandemic, I feel like we would all benefit from a “reboot” – getting out to meet, see, listen, and brainstorm together. We also have some talented experts in organizational management and assessment who have done recent good work before us – generating valuable data that is still relevant and powerful – whose work I plan to tap into over the next six months, as this process unfolds. *“Restart” does not also have to mean “re-invent the wheel.”*

“Synod Redesign Committee.” At our March 30 Meeting, the Synod Council discussed and approved the formation of a select committee, who will be made up of clergy and lay persons, to look into and propose a plan to do the following: *“...an evaluation and possible redesign of the synod's purpose, structure, roles, and basic policies of organizational functioning.”* This committee would be created by me and the **new Synod Vice President** that's elected in June, in consultation with the Synod Council. Our goal would be to assemble this committee by the Fall of 2023, and that the committee would come up with a plan and time table – so stay tuned.

This is not a complete list of the good work that God is setting before us for the coming year – but these are among the more notable. I look forward to getting your input and accepting your offer to take a leading role on these ideas and projects, making them better than any one of us could have imagined by ourselves – as we live into the big imagination of our awesome God!

In Christ, we are GOING BEYOND!



Christopher deForest, Your Bishop

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(The following changes took place between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023.)

ROSTER CHANGES FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Ordinations

Edelman, Jamie, ordained October 9, 2022

Received from Other Synods

Bushkofsky, Dennis, from Metro Chicago Synod, January 30, 2023

Tigerman, Justin, from Southwestern Minnesota Synod, February 14, 2023

Transferred to Other Synods

Elliott, Richard, to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, October 31, 2022

Garman, Timothy, to the Lower Susquehanna Synod, May 8, 2022

Rivera Garcia, Nelson, to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, September 19, 2022

Serafin, Joseph, to the Virginia Synod, October 24, 2022

Resigned from the Roster

Removed from the Roster

Deaths

Beck, Donald P., died July 31, 2022

Burdick, Raymond C., died August 21, 2022

Bushkofsky, Dennis L., died February 2, 2023

Charles, Charles J., died July 23, 2022

Chaveas, Richard W., died March 19, 2023

Cloughan, Edward W., died April 26, 2023

Delp, Lawrence P., died August 30, 2022

Haring, Linda R., died December 11, 2022

Hoh, Paul J. II, died January 19, 2023

Pelletier, Phyllis A., died April 12, 2023

Stephenson, Lester E. Jr., died December 20, 2022

Tomlinson, John W. Jr., died April 24, 2023

Wagner, Deborah M., died March 11, 2023

The Rev. Donald Philip Beck was born on September 27, 1939, in New York, New York. He was a son of Christian Louis and Madeleine H. (Ronnermann) Beck. Pastor Beck graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1961 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1964. He was ordained by the New York Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on June 4, 1964.

Pastor Beck served in the following calls: St. Paul, Narrowsburg, New York (1964-1986); Cross of Christ, Babylon, New York (1986-1995). Following his retirement in 1995, Pastor Beck con-

tinued his pastoral ministry in interim and supply capacities in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

On September 26, 1964, Pastor Beck married Carol Jean Bircks. They have three children: Philip J., Daniel P., and Michael J. Beck. On October 12, 1996, he married Margaret A. Weber, who survives him.

The Rev. Raymond Clarence Burdick Jr., was born on February 13, 1939, in New York, New York. He was a son of Raymond and Lillian Burdick. Pastor Burdick graduated from City College of New York in 1960 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1985. He was ordained by the Virginia Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on June 23, 1985.

Pastor Burdick served in the following calls: St. Paul, Albrightsville (1985-1987); St. John, Gibraltar (1987-1991); Chaplain, Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital, Allentown (1991-1992); Chaplain, Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown (1992 – 1993); Chaplain, St. Joseph Hospital, Reading (1993-2001). Following his retirement in 2001, Pastor Burdick continued his pastoral ministry in interim and supply capacities within the Northeastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania Synods.

On September 12, 1976, he married Susan E. Rodgers, who survives him.

Then Rev. Dennis L. Bushkofsky was born on July 15, 1958, in Oelwein, Iowa. He was the son of Ronald and Marie (Kuper) Bushkofsky. Pastor Bushkofsky graduated from Luther College, Iowa, in 1980, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1986. He was ordained on June 13, 1986.

Pastor Bushkofsky served in the following calls: Our Savior's, Sebeka, Minnesota (1986-1989); St. John, Whitehall, Pennsylvania (1989 – 1997); and United Lutheran Church, Oak Park, Illinois (2012 – 2022) as well as other intentional interim assignments in Illinois.

On May 20, 1989, he married Linda Carol Post, who survives him along with their two children, Judy Jackson and Jayden Jackson, and Pastor Bushkofsky's mother.

The Rev. Charles John Charles was born on October 4, 1936, in Sunbury, Pennsylvania. He was a son of John Elwood Charles and Sarah Margaret (Kiechline) Charles. Pastor Charles graduated from Gettysburg College in 1958 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg in 1962. He was ordained by the Central Pennsylvania Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America on June 5, 1962.

Pastor Charles served in the following calls: Mission Developer, Messiah, Moundsville, West Virginia (1962-1970); Christ, Reading (1970-1981); Director, Greater Reading Area Involved

Lutherans (GRAIL), Reading (1981-1989); and Allegheny, Knauers (1989-2000). Following his retirement, Pastor Charles continued his pastoral ministry in interim and supply capacities in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

On September 7, 1963, he married Elizabeth Anne Eser, who survives him. They have two children: Deborah Anne Davis and David Jonathan Charles.

The Rev. Richard W. Chaveas was born on April 1, 1948, in Philadelphia. He was the son of William and Evelyn Chaveas. Pastor Chaveas graduated from Drew University (1970) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (1989). He was ordained on July 9, 1989, by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Pastor Chaveas served Faith, Blakeslee (1989-1993); Holy Spirit, Emmaus (1993-1997); St. John, Whitehall (1997-2001); and Allegheny, Knauers (2001-2008).

On December 13, 1980, he married Debra Deibler, who survives him. They have two sons: Andrew and Matthew.

The Rev. Edward W. Cloughen was born in New York City and raised in Dumont, New Jersey. He was the son of Elmer and Dorothea (Bothe) Cloughen. He was a graduate of Muhlenberg College and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He was ordained on May 28, 1967, by the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod, Lutheran Church in America.

Pastor Cloughen served Grace, Lehighton (1967-1969); Trinity, Bangor (1969-1971); St. Paul, Tower City (1971-1976); St. Daniel's, Robesonia (1976-1988); St. Luke's, Reading (1988-1996); St. Mark's, Birdsboro (1996-1999); St. Peter's (Becker's) and Zion, Fleetwood (1999-2004). He also was a radio announcer for WEEU in Reading.

On July 5, 1968, he married Cynthia Heiser, who predeceased him. On August 23, 2003, he married Ethel (Lawrence) Edwards, who survives him along with his children Ward E. Cloughen and Sarajane Weidner and his stepchildren Michael Edwards and Suzanne Bolig.

The Rev. Lawrence P. Delp was born September 10, 1928, in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Paul L. and Katharine (Schellhammer) Delp. Pastor Delp graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1948 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1951. He was ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania on May 23, 1951.

Pastor Delp served in the following calls: St. John, Berrysburg, (1951-1956); Christ, Conyngham, (1956-1962); St. John, Bath (1962-1965); Faith, Mt. Penn (1965-1987); Jerusalem, Trachsville (1987-1993). Following his retirement in 1993, Pastor Delp continued his pastoral ministry in interim and supply capacities in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

On August 26, 1950, he married Margie Arner. They are survived by sons Lawrence F. and John M. Delp. Another son, David J., predeceased his parents.

The Rev. Lynda R. Haring was born June 21, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois. She was the daughter of William M. and Anita M. Kyd. She graduated from Eastern Illinois University (1971) and Valparaiso University Deaconess Program (1976). She was consecrated a deaconess on September 10, 1978, and she was ordained on July 19, 1981, by the English Synod of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

Pastor Haring served in the following calls: Chaplain at Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge, Illinois (1981-1982); St. Mark, Reading (1982-1988); St. John, Mohnton (1988-2000); Zion, Womelsdorf (2000-2008). Following her retirement in 2008 she served as Chaplain and Translator for Hospice Saint John. She was also a Chaplain of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

On May 1, 1993, she married Neil A. Haring, who survives her.

The Rev. Paul J. Hoh II was born on September 27, 1934, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Ernest J. and Ruth C. (Kirsch) Hoh. Pastor Hoh graduated from Denison University in Granville, Ohio (1955), and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1959). He was ordained by the Central Pennsylvania Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America on June 12, 1959.

Pastor Hoh served in the following calls: Christ, Glenside (1959-1966); Assistant to the President of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (1969-1975); St. John, Reading (1975-1992); Vice President for Inner Mission and Community Ministries of the Lutheran Home at Topton (1992-1997). He was active on the inter-faith Social Action Cabinet of Reading and several Lutheran ministries from the national to district level, including the Philadelphia Seminary Board. Pastor Hoh also enjoyed a long career as a civil servant, working within local and state government, including time as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Reading City Council President. He was founder-president of the Berks County Prison Society (now Berks Connections), which named its volunteer award in honor of Paul and Kate Hoh..

On June 17, 1956, he married Mary C. Houseman, who survives him. They have four children: Chris, Robyn, Eric, and Scott.

The Rev. Phyllis Pelletier was born on May 16, 1944, in Brunswick, Maine. She was the daughter of Irenée and Claire (Pelletier) Pelletier. After working as a medical technologist for twenty-six years, Pastor Pelletier graduated from the University of Southern Maine (1986) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (1993). She was ordained by the New England Synod on September 19, 1993.

Pastor Pelletier served the following calls: Northern Aroostook Parish, Maine (1993-1996); Christ, Springtown, Pennsylvania (1996-2002); and St. John, Nanitcoke, and St. Mark, Pond Hill (2002-2009). Following a period of retirement, from 2014 to 2019 she served Shepherd of

the Hills Lutheran Church (consisting of Zion Chapel, Dushore; St. John's Chapel, Wilmot; and Trinity Chapel, Mildred, until its closing). Until just weeks before her death, she continued her ministry by serving many congregations as a Sunday supply pastor.

[The Rev. Lester Edward Stephenson Jr. was born on June 21, 1947, in Reading, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Lester E. and Marion \(Brown\) Stephenson. Pastor Stephenson graduated from Albright College \(1970\) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg \(1974\).](#)

Following his ordination by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on May 21, 1974, Pastor Stephenson served in the following calls: St. John's, Jim Thorpe East (1974 – 1979); St. Mark, Scranton (1979 – 2004); St. Matthew United, Scranton (2005 – 2015). Following his retirement in 2015 he served as interim and supply pastor for various congregations.

On May 2, 1981, he married Ruth Ann Meeson, who survives him. They have two children: Amy and Joel.

The Rev. John W. Tomlinson Jr. was born on September 20, 1934, in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. He was the son of John W. and Maddaline R. (Conner) Tomlinson. He attended Ursinus College (1952-1954) and was employed by Swartley Bros. of Lansdale as an assistant to the electrical engineer (1960-1967). He served in the US Air Force. Pastor Tomlinson graduated from Temple University (1969) and from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (1971). He was ordained by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Lutheran Church in America, on June 27, 1971.

Pastor Tomlinson served the New Ringgold Parish (1971-1976); Messiah, Wilkes Barre (1976 - 1982); and Friedens, Center Valley (1982-1999). He served as past Secretary of the Lehigh Mission District and on the Board of Lutheran Congregational Services (formerly Lutheran Services of the Lehigh Valley).

On November 19, 1965, Pastor Tomlinson married Dorothy M. Wert, who survives him. He is survived by daughters Bonnie Corona and Virginia Faust.

The **Rev. Deborah M. Wagner** was born on **May 1, 1936, in Baltimore, Maryland.** She was the **daughter of** Charles John and Dorothy Rosa (Rau) Kus.

Pastor Wagner graduated from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Rutgers University, and Princeton Theological Seminary. She was certified as an Associate in Ministry in 1988 and served at Messiah, Bethlehem (1988-1993). She received her Master of Divinity from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Following her ordination by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on June 9, 1996, Pastor Wagner served Jerusalem, Eastern Salisbury (1996-2002). Following her retirement in 2002 she served as interim pastor for St. Andrew, Summit Hill.

On August 24, 1958, she married the Rev. Walter Wagner. They have a son, Nathan Samuel Wagner.

Changes in Positions

Argot, Robert, from Holy Spirit, Reading, to St. John, Reading, October 1, 2022
Bennethum, D. Michael, from Director for Evangelical Mission to retirement, October 1, 2022
Butz, Jeffrey, from Zion, Maxatawny, to retirement, September 1, 2022
Christy, Mark, from on leave from call to retirement, February 1, 2023
Dee, Jennifer, from Trinity Robesonia, to Trinity, Robesonia, as Lead Pastor, October 1, 2022
Edelman, Jamie, newly ordained to United Fellowship, Easton, August 28, 2022
Geyer, Cynthia, of the Moravian Church to Redeemer, Allentown, April 1, 2023
Hacker, Rachel, from St. Peter, Hanover Ave., Allentown, to Emmanuel, Emanuelsville, November 6, 2022
Heavner, Brandon, from St. Mark, Bethlehem, to Weisenberg, Weisenberg Township, February 20, 2023
Horst, Susan, from WellSpan PhilHaven to Penn State Health St. Joseph, August 1, 2022
Irwin, Thomas, from on leave from call to retirement, February 1, 2023
Koch, Werner, from St. Stephen, Bethlehem, to retirement, November 1, 2022
Lupole, Wayne, from Christ, Hazleton, to retirement, July 1, 2022
Maxon, William, from Christ, Allentown, to retirement, September 1, 2022
Staniszewski, Deborah, from Christ, Conyngham, to St. Paul of Smithfield, Craigs Meadows, February 19, 2023
Steltz, John, of the United Church of Christ to Huff's, Huffs Church, July 20, 2022
Stinner, Franklin, from on leave from call to retirement, January 1, 2023
Trump, Suzanne, from St. John Windish to retirement, February 1, 2023

ROSTER CHANGES FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

Ordinations

Talley, Dawn, May 1, 2022.

Received from Other Synods

Tigerman, Kathleen, from Southwestern Minnesota Synod, April 3, 2023

Transferred to Other Synods

Elliott, Jane, to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, October 31, 2022

Resigned from Roster

None

Removed from Roster

None

Deaths

Blew, Hannelore, died March 30, 2023

Miller, Ruth Naomi Terry, died November 18, 2022

Millicent Jane Drake, died February 10, 2023

Deacon Hannelore Blew was born on October 26, 1932, in Koenigsberg, Germany, to Dr. Bernhard and Hanna-Carla (Gersdorf) Freyberg. She graduated from Wellesley College (1954) and was certified as an Associate in Ministry in 1982. Deacon Blew served St. John, Allentown, as Director of Christian Education and Parish Administrator (1973-1998). She served as dean of the Allentown School of the Lay Academy, as chair of the Associates in Ministry Task Force for the synod, as a founding member of the board for the Lutheran Academy in Northampton, and in various community and educational organizations.

On June 19, 1954, she married Wilbur J. Blew, who predeceased her. They had three children: Kristine Pearson, Eric Blew, and Alison Roithmayr.

Deacon Ruth Naomi Terry Miller was born on February 21, 1941. A native of Ringtown, Pennsylvania, she was a daughter of Ralph and Miriam Terry. Deacon Miller graduated from Muhlenberg College (1962) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1988). She was commissioned as an Associate in Ministry by the Lutheran Church in America on May 22, 1980.

Deacon Miller served in the following positions: Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry at St. James, Coopersburg; Editor for Senior High School Youth and Older Youth Resources, Division for Parish Services, Lutheran Church in America; Assistant to the Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (1988-1996); and as the synod's Director of Ministry Resources (1996-2005).

On June 23, 1962, Deacon Miller married Kenneth Mille. They have three children: Karen, Kristen, and David.

Deacon Millicent Jane Drake was born on July 29, 1932, in Elizabeth, New Jersey. She was the daughter of William R. and Millicent (Smith) Drake. She graduated from Moravian College (1954) and the Bryn Mawr School of Social Work (1958) and attended the Philadelphia Deaconess School.

Following her consecration as a deaconess on June 8, 1958, she served in the Reading and Pottsville offices of the Lutheran Children's Bureau (1958-1970); at Hope, Reading (1970-1974); and at St. John, Boyertown (1974-2015).

Changes in Positions

Schaeffer, Kathy, Friedens, Oley, to retirement, August 1, 2022

Kidd, Patrice, on leave from call to retirement, September 1, 2022

Stump, Janet, St. Timothy, Allentown, to retirement, April 1, 2023

CONGREGATIONAL CHANGES

St. Paul, Easton and Good Shepherd, Easton consolidated on August 1, 2022, to form United Fellowship, Easton.

Grace, Reading; Holy Spirit, Reading; St. John, Reading; St. Luke, Reading merged on October 1, 2022, to form Renewed Spirit Church, Reading.

Light of Christ, Bethlehem; St. John's Windish, Bethlehem; St. Peters, Bethlehem; consolidated on February 5, 2023, to form Blessed Trinity, Bethlehem.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

The Synod Council of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod met seven times for business since the 2022 Synod Assembly: July 23, 2022; November 19, 2022; December 10, 2022; December 17, 2022; January 14, 2023; March 30, 2023; and April 15, 2023. The council also met at the home of Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner for a formation event on September 10, 2022.

In addition to the regular business normally coming to the council, the Reference and Counsel resolutions not dealt with by the 2022 Synod Assembly were referred to the Synod Council for action. Those actions are included in this report; the full texts of those resolutions can be found in the Minutes of the 2022 Synod Assembly.

The numbers preceding the resolutions indicate the year, month, and sequence of the resolution. Hence, (2023.04.01) means the first resolution adopted in April of 2023. Council resolutions that are recommendations for assembly action appear in bold face.

The categories into which the resolutions are placed are somewhat arbitrary. For example, it can sometimes be the case that a resolution could fall under Budget and Finance because it carries a cost to the synod but could also fall under Calls, Appointments, and Roster Maintenance because it involves appointing someone to a position.

Assembly

(2022.07.09) *Resolved*, That Synod Council appoint the following persons to serve as Churchwide Assembly voting members:

Ms. Ashley Teter
Ms. Judy Seroska
Ms. Sara Neidig
Ms. Nancy Reichelt

(2023.04.02). *Resolved*, That the following resolution concerning the 2023 assembly program be recommended to the 2023 Synod Assembly:

***Resolved*, That the 2023 Assembly program (as printed in the Bulletin of Reports) be adopted.**

Budget and Finance

(2022.07.06) *Resolved*, That Ahner's Cleanout & General Contractor LLC be engaged for a maximum of \$16,000.00 to complete cleaning out the church and parsonage formerly owned by St. John Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, to the extent that this work can be done safely given the condition of the buildings.

(2022.07.12) *Resolved*, That the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the following Corporate Resolution in regards to the Florence Y. Flach Trust:

Resolved, That the following are Authorized Entity Representatives and a minimum of four of them is/are required in order to take such actions and execute such documents on behalf of the Corporation with respect to its agreement with Wells Fargo: Christopher deForest, Kristen Edelman-Weiner, Donald Boyer, and Carl Shankweiler.

Resolved, That Wells Fargo shall be fully protected by relying upon this Resolution and shall be indemnified and held harmless from any and all claims, demands, expenses, losses or damages, including reasonable attorney fees related to Wells Fargo's reliance on this Resolution.

Resolved, That this Resolution shall replace and supersede any prior Resolution on this subject in conflict herewith.

(2022.11.01) *Resolved*, That only the officers of the synod or their designees be authorized to sign checks or contracts on behalf of the synod, with at least two signatures required per document.

(2022.11.02) *Resolved*, That the interest rate for loans from the Church Loan Fund be set at three percent beginning from the time of this resolution's adoption, other than for loans to new mission congregations for which the interest rate shall continue to be zero percent in keeping with Continuing Resolution II.3.

(2022.11.03) *Resolved*, That a grant of \$5,000 from the Mission Development Fund be given to the Lutheran Witness along the Delaware in 2023 in support of their witness to the Gospel.

(2022.11.09) *Resolved*, That the amounts designated below as housing allowances shall apply to the calendar year 2023 and all future years unless otherwise provided by this Synod Council:

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

(2022.12.02) *Resolved*, That the Finance Committee come to the January meeting of the Synod Council with a recommendation for restoring Laurie Christman and Deborah Skinner to being full time on the synod staff.

(2022.12.03) *Resolved*, That, if given legal clearance, the synod charge a one percent management fee for administering the special funds under its control.

(2022.12.06) A cap of \$75.00 per recipient (10 people) with money to come from the General Fund and be moved into the Bishop's Discretionary Fund, any giving would be at the discretion of the bishop. [Note: this resolution refers to Christmas bonuses paid to the synod staff.]

(2022.12.07) *Resolved*, That the coordinating staff be allowed to carry over into fiscal year 2023 any unused vacation time from fiscal year 2022.

(2023.01.02) To approve the SALM Launch coordinator position, contract for one year, six to eight hours per week, for \$12,000 plus travel and expenses to be paid from the Mission Development Fund, with the option to extend the contract and with periodic reporting to the Synod Council.

(2023.01.04) *Resolved*, That the 2023 Payment Authorization Schedule as presented be approved.

(2023.01.05) *Resolved*, That Laurie Christman and Deborah Skinner of the synod's coordinating staff be asked to work an additional seven and ten hours per week respectively.

(2023.01.06) *Resolved*, That the coordinating staff, including Eric Gombert, receive an increase of 8.7% for fiscal year 2023.

(2023.01.07) *Resolved*, That Bishop Christopher deForest, Pastor Rachael Dietz, Deacon Travis Woodfield, Pastor Michael Bennethum, Pastor Jean Huber, Pastor Charles Grube, Pastor Kathleen Ash-Flashner, Pastor Samantha Drennan, Pastor Lauren Wolfe Blatt, and Pastor Niels Nielson (through the synod's contract with his congregation) receive increases of 5.5% for fiscal year 2023.

(2023.04.03) *Resolved*, That the following resolution concerning the 2024 spending proposal be recommended to the 2023 Synod Assembly:

Resolved, that the 2024 spending proposal (February 1, 2024, to January 31, 2025) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2024 spending proposal no later than its January 2024 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.)

(2023.04.04) *Resolved*, That the spending policies for synod funds for the fiscal year 2024 be established as follows:

- 8% (c. \$55,567) of the Mission Development Fund
- 8% (c. \$104,431) of the Clyde Kelchner Fund
- 10% (c. 15,504) of the Student Education Fund
- 6% (c. \$6,031) of the Leadership Development Fund
- 8% (c. \$37,447) of the Social Ministry Fund

(2023.04.05) *Resolved*, That a loan in an amount not to exceed \$180,000 be made from the Church Loan Development Fund to Reformation Lutheran Church, Reiffton, Pennsylvania. The terms of the loan will be an amount not to exceed \$180,000 with a seven-year repayment schedule at three percent interest.

Calls, Appointments, and Roster Maintenance

(2022.07.10) *Resolved*, That a one-year call to special service be issued to the Rev. Kim Truebenbach to serve as interim pastor of St. Joseph Hill, Boyertown, from August 1, 2022 through July 31, 2023.

(2022.07.11) *Resolved*, That the Synod Council extend an invitation to the Rev. John Seitz, an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the United Church of Christ, to serve as pastor of Huff's Union Church, Alburtis, Pennsylvania, beginning on July 20, 2022, the date established by the congregation.

(2023.04.01) *Resolved*, That in accordance with BLS10.03.b. and BLS10.03.c. of the synod's constitution and bylaws, that the Rev. R. Zachary Labagh be elected to serve as a part-time associate of the bishop, beginning June 1, 2023, with an initial annual salary of \$18,000.

(2023.01.01) *Resolved*, That the position of Congregational Director of Legacy and Purpose, filled by Deacon Travis Woodfield, be extended for one year under the current terms with the expectation of periodic reporting of actual outcomes being made to the Synod Council according to reporting requirements as defined by the Administration Committee.

(2023.04.09) *Resolved*, That a Call to Special Service be issued to the Rev. Janelle S. Neubauer to serve as Muhlenberg College Chaplain beginning July 15, 2021.

(2023.04.10) *Resolved*, That a Call to Special Service be issued to the Rev. Roxanne Kringle to serve as Chaplain of the Good Shepherd Raker Center beginning March 28, 2022.

(2023.04.11) *Resolved*, That a Call to Special Service be issued to Deacon Kathleen Tigerman to serve as the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod's Director for Evangelical Mission beginning April 3, 2023.

(2022.07.07) *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:

Pastor (first year):	The Rev. Joseph Serafin
Pastor (first year)	The Rev. Werner Koch
Pastor (second year)	The Rev. Katie Lyon
Pastor (fifth year/study)	The Rev. Elizabeth Haines

(2022.11.06) *Resolved*, That in accordance with sections 7.31.07. and 7.61.08. of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Clergy (first year): The Rev. Carl Filer (September 1, 2022)

(2023.04.08) *Resolved*, That in accordance with sections 7.31.07. and 7.61.08. of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Clergy (first year): The Rev. Brian Holben (December 1, 2022)

(2023.01.09) *Resolved*, That in accordance with sections 7.31.07. and 7.61.08. of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Clergy (first year): The Rev. Kim Truebenbach (February 1, 2023)

(2022.07.08) *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. Jeffrey Butz (September 1, 2022)
The Rev. Richard Elliott (August 1, 2022)
The Rev. Wayne Lupole (July 1, 2022)
The Rev. William Maxon (September 1, 2022)
Deacon Kathleen Schaeffer (August 1, 2022)

(2022.11.07) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaws 7.41.07 and 7.71.04. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leader be granted the roster status of "retired":

Deacon Patrice Kidd (September 1, 2022)

(2022.12.04) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaws 7.41.07 and 7.71.04. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leader be granted the roster status of "retired":

The Rev. Werner Koch (November 1, 2022)

(2023.01.08) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaws 7.41.07 and 7.71.04. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leader be granted the roster status of "retired":

Deacon Janet Stump (April 1, 2023)

(2023.04.07) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaws 7.41.07 and 7.71.04. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leader be granted the roster status of "retired":

The Rev. Mark Christy (February 1, 2023)
The Rev. Thomas F. Irwin Jr. (February 1, 2023)
The Rev. Suzanne Trump (February 1, 2023)

(2022.11.08) *Resolved*, That in accordance with ELCA bylaws 7.41.08 and 7.71.05. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leader's roster status be changed to "disability":
The Rev. David Blitch (September 1, 2022)

Congregations and Authorized Worshipping Communities

(2022.11.04) *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.

(2022.11.05) *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.

Mission Districts

(2022.11.10) *Resolved*, That the 2023 budget of the West Berks Mission District be approved.

2022 Reference and Counsel Resolutions

(2022.07.01) *Resolved*, That the Synod Council adopt as presented to the 2022 Synod Assembly the resolution "Concerning Anti-Racism Education Emphasis."

(2022.07.02) *Resolved*, That the resolution "Participation of the Whole Body of Christ" be approved and that the Synod Council be asked to determine (1) how the intent of this resolution can be conveyed to the congregations of the synod and (2) how to implement this resolution's call to service.

(2022.07.03) *Resolved*, That the Synod Council approve the proposed resolution concerning COVID mitigation in the following amended form:

Resolved, That all the congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod live-out this Christian love by recommending and communicating on-going COVID policies based upon current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data¹; and be it further

Resolved, That these recommended COVID policies dynamically increase & decrease mitigation as threat levels increase and decrease respectively—such as requiring properly worn, effective masking and reducing activities that increase air-borne contagion risks (singing, close unmasked prolonged gatherings, indoor eating); and be it further

Resolved, That they will know we are Christians by our love.

(2022.07.04) *Resolved*, That the resolution concerning gun control legislation be referred to the Committee of Deans for their action.

(2022.07.05) *Resolved*, That the Synod Council affirm the sending of the Resolution Concerning Affirming the Environment to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

(2022.12.01) *Resolved*, That the specific action items two through seven in the Resolution

Concerning Affirming the Environment be approved.

Synod Organization and Policies

(2023.01.03) *Resolved*, That Continuing Resolution I.10. be amended to read, "Resolutions received by the Committee of Reference and Counsel fewer than fourteen days before the opening of the Synod Assembly will not be considered at that assembly. For such resolutions to be considered, a motion needs (a) to be presented from the floor to suspend the rules (an action that is not debatable) and (b) to be affirmed by a two-thirds vote."

(2023.03.01) *Resolved*, That the Synod Council authorize an evaluation and possible redesign of the synod's purpose, structure, roles, and basic policies of organizational functioning in light of the many changes which have occurred in the life of the synod since the last comparable process was done a generation ago; and that to carry out this study a select committee be appointed by the bishop and vice president, to be chaired by Kristen Edelman-Weiner and to report by a time the study group determines.

(2023.04.06) *Resolved*, That the February 2023 resource paper and sabbatical policy for rostered ministers serving under call in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be endorsed, supported, and put forth to the 2023 Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

I would like to thank the congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod for their financial support received during the 2022 fiscal year. Our fiscal year begins on February 1 and ends on January 31 of the following year. In the 2022 fiscal year the synod received \$49,133 more in mission support than we budgeted.

The total revenue budgeted for the 2022 fiscal year was \$2,098,250. The actual revenue received was \$1,926,513 resulting in a shortfall of \$171,737. \$100,000 of this shortfall was due to an anticipated change in the funding of the DEM position which was not implemented. The actual expenditures of \$1,869,755 was \$178,496 less than the budgeted expenditures of \$2,048,251. The 2022 fiscal year ended with a surplus of \$56,758.

In the current fiscal year (2023), we are feeling the impact of inflation. We can examine the impact of inflation over the last seven 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 2023 budgeted revenue is \$2,061,400. This is \$738,816 lower than the 2016 actual revenue. We can measure the impact of inflation on the 2023 spending plan as of March 2023, by deflating the revenue based on changes in the CPI. The result is that the \$2,061,400 budgeted revenue is equal to \$1,658,407 in 2016 dollars. This is a reduction of \$402,993 in purchasing power. If the rapid increase in the rate of inflation continues, the 2023 fiscal year will probably end with a deficit.

The 2024 spending plan will be presented later. The plan was constructed using the following:

REVENUE SOURCES

Deferred Revenue	7.30%
Mission Support	87.20%
DEM Grant (ELCA)	0.48%
Event Income	3.14%
Transfers	1.50%
Other	0.38%
Total Revenue Sources	100%

EXPENDITURES

ELCA Support	40.98%
Synod Staff	32.77%
Administration	5.53%

Building & Office	7.43%
Institution & Agency Support	7.00%
Witness & Service Team	4.00%
Ministry Teams	1.34%
Budgetary Reserve	0.95%
Total Expenditures	100%

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

SPENDING PLAN

<u>Account Description</u>	2022 Approved Budget	2022 Unaudited Actual	2023 Approved Budget	2024 Proposed Budget
Deferred Revenue Available for Appropriations	91,850	0	100,000	150,000
REVENUE				
Interest Earnings	15,000	871		
Rental Income	2,400	4,800	2,400	2,400
Events Income	24,000	25,705	24,000	30,000
Mission Support	1,800,000	1,849,133	1,830,000	1,800,000
DEM Support Grant	110,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Estate Donations		142		
Synod Assembly	50,000	32,670	90,000	35,000
Transfers				31,700
Miscellaneous Income	5,000	3,192	5,000	5,000
TOTAL REVENUE	2,006,400	1,926,513	1,961,400	1,914,100
Total Funds Available for Appropriations	2,098,250	1,926,513	2,061,400	2,064,100

EXPENDITURES

WORKSHOPS	2,000	2,541	2,000	10,500
ELCA MISSION SUPPORT	846,000	869,093	860,100 47%	846,000
TOTAL TEAMS	94,200	46,022	96,100	99,900
WORSHIP TEAM	400	0	400	400
FAITH FORMATION RESOURCE TEAM	400	2,660	2,500	3,500
YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT, AND FAMILY TEAM	4,900	1,775	3,700	4,000
RESOURCE CENTER OPERATIONS	1,000	1,065	2,000	2,500
CONNECTION BUILDING TEAM	1,000	137	1,000	1,000
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM	3,500	500	3,500	5,500
WITNESS & SERVICE TEAM	83,000	39,884	83,000	83,000
Witness Service Operations	200		200	200
Gay & Lesbian Ministry TF	100		100	100
Accessibility Team	100		100	100
World Hunger Advocates	100		100	100
Green Team	100		100	100
Witness & Service Grants	9,150	5,954	9,150	9,150
Support Intern & Other Leaders	5,500	2,750	5,500	5,500
New Initiatives	17,000	680	17,000	17,000
Common Ground	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
Hope's Table	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Campus Ministry	20,000		20,000	20,000
Leisure Ministry	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Global Mission	250		250	250

<u>Account Description</u>	2022		2023	2024
	<u>Approved Budget</u>	<u>Unaudited Actual</u>	<u>Approved Budget</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
INSTITUTION & AGENCY SUPPORT TOTAL	144,000	147,931	146,400	8.0% 144,000
INSTITUTION SUPPORT	16,200	16,642	16,470	0.9% 16,200
Diakon	5,400	5,547	5,490	0.3%
Lutheran Congregational Services	5,400	5,547	5,490	0.3%
Good Shepherd	5,400	5,547	5,490	0.3%
AGENCY SUPPORT	127,800	131,289	129,930	7.1% 127,800
United Seminary	90,000	92,457	91,500	5.0%
Bear Creek Camp	25,200	25,888	25,620	1.4%
Muhlenberg College	5,400	5,547	5,490	0.3%
PA Conference of Churches	3,600	3,698	3,660	0.2%
LAMPA	3,600	3,698	3,660	0.2%
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TOTAL	21,000	7,520	21,000	21,000
Candidacy	15,000	1,520	15,000	15,000
Archives	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
ADMINISTRATION TOTAL	941,051	796,410	916,000	922,900
BISHOP'S OFFICE	32,700	22,444	32,900	32,900
Bishops Discretionary Fund	1,500	17	1,500	1,500
Consultations-Cong/Professional Ldrs.	2,000		2,000	2,000
Interim Ministry	500	150	500	500
Bishop Conference	23,000	17,257	23,000	23,000
Ecumenism	100		100	100
Stewardship	2,600	4,870	2,800	2,800
Assignment Travel Pool	1,500		1,500	1,500
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,500	150	1,500	1,500
ADMINISTRATOR	53,200	34,361	103,200	60,200
Administrator Office Expenses	1,000		1,000	3,000
Assembly Expenses	50,000	29,834	100,000	50,000
Retired Pastors Event		2,375		2,500
Synod Council Expenses	200		200	200
Staff Events/Bonus		1,730		2,500
Legal Services	2,000	422	2,000	2,000
SYNOD STAFF	689,351	594,849	626,600	676,500
Contract Services	30,884	19,356	20,000	
Executive Staff (2024-all staff combined)	399,822	423,904	442,000	645,000
Travel - Executive Staff	30,600	21,389	30,600	30,000
Support Staff	116,545	129,885	132,500	
Travel - Support Staff	1,500	316	1,500	1,500
DEM 2021	110,000			
BUILDING AND OFFICE	165,800	144,755	153,300	153,300
Building Expenses/Occupancy	81,300	89,079	81,300	81,300
Office Expenses	40,000	34,397	40,000	40,000
Computer Expenses	6,500	6,379	6,500	6,500
Auditors	25,000	14,900	25,000	25,000
Major Capital Improvements/Maintenance	12,500			
Miscellaneous Expenses	500		500	500
BUDGETARY RESERVE			19,800	19,800
TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURES	2,048,251	1,869,516	2,061,400	2,064,100
TOTAL INCOME MINUS TOTAL EXPENSES	49,999	56,997	0	0

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Constitution Committee included Pr. Kenneth Melber, Pr. Brandon Heavner, Pr. Michael Bennethum, Ms. Kristen Edelman-Weiner, Pr. Rachael Dietz, and Pr. Carl Shankweiler, Chairperson.

1. SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS DESIGNATED BY MISSION DISTRICTS.

Because of a conflict between *S10.01. and BLS10.07. concerning the election of mission district representatives to the Synod Council, the committee recommends a bylaw revision so that BLS10.07. is amended to read ["one person from each Mission District who has been nominated by the Mission District assembly" in contrast to the current wording, "one person by each Mission District."](#) This makes clear that the district is nominating, but not electing, the person; it also makes clear that the district's assembly is to do the nominating, not the council or the dean.

Resolved, That BLS10.07 be amended as include the words "one person from each Mission District who has been nominated by the Mission District assembly" in replacement of the current wording, "one person by each Mission District."

2. ITEMS ARRIVING LATE FOR REFERENCE AND COUNSEL CONSIDERATION.

The 2022 assembly spent a great amount of time debating whether to consider a late-arriving resolution. It is desirable to deal very quickly with an issue of that sort. This can be accomplished by making the procedural matter into one of suspending the rule concerning late-arriving resolutions.

The Constitution Committee asked the Synod Council to amend Continuing Resolution I.10., which was done (according to *S18.31. continuing resolutions can be amended by the assembly or by the Synod Council). This provision now reads as follows: "Resolutions received by the Committee of Reference and Counsel fewer than fourteen days before the opening of the Synod Assembly will not be considered at that assembly. For such resolutions to be considered, a motion needs (a) to be presented from the floor to suspend the rules (an action that is not debatable) and (b) to be affirmed by a two-thirds vote."

If any resolutions are presented late, the Committee of Reference and Counsel would report that (a) such resolutions have been received but (b) will not be acted upon. The author of a resolution or any other voting member could then move to suspend the rules to allow for its consideration. The chair might call for the reading of the proposed resolution or in another way determine that everyone knows the text of the resolution. Then, without debate, the chair would call for a vote as to whether the resolution in question should be allowed to come before the assembly. If there is a two-thirds vote in favor of consideration, the Committee of Reference and Counsel would then bring the matter to the assembly at the appropriate time and bring with it at that time the committee's recommendation.

3. WHAT TO CALL THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL.

Robert's talks about a *Resolutions Committee*, which is clearer in intent than a *Committee of Reference and Counsel*. However, our constitution's S7.51. uses the term *Committee of Reference and Counsel* and lists more responsibilities for this committee than simply dealing with resolutions. It was agreed not to change the constitution at this point but to begin using the term *Resolutions Committee* in conjunction with the traditional term.

4. REFERENCE AND COUNSEL RESOLUTIONS "WITHOUT PREJUDICE."

The Constitution Committee discussed whether any changes in governing documents are needed

to deal with Reference and Counsel resolutions in light of that committee's 2022 practice of bringing some resolutions to the assembly "without prejudice." It was felt that the matter is in how to explain and handle those resolutions, i.e., that "without prejudice" means that the original resolution is before the house but without the committee's taking a stand in favor or against.

5. OFFICE OF SYNOD SECRETARY.

The work and anticipated change in office holder of the position of synod secretary was discussed. Pastor Shankweiler explained that he now found the workload impossible for him since there was no longer any major assistance from the synod's support staff (Diane Hemerly once did the secretarial work to prepare the Bulletin of Reports and the Minutes Book). He found the position very enjoyable and doable before the loss of Ms. Hemerly's assistance. The committee's discussion concerned who might take the position and how it could be reconfigured now that there is the possibility of again increasing support assistance. In time the Synod Council took action to increase the hours of several persons who work at the synod office, in part to provide the secretary with more assistance.

6. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS AS APPROVED BY THE 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY.

The committee reviewed the document from the ELCA concerning amendments to the Constitution for Synods as approved by the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. The need to incorporate all required changes was acknowledged; these changes will appear in the synod's constitution as posted online after this 2023 assembly. The ELCA's optional recommendations were reviewed and either accepted or declined as explained below. All of the optional items recommended for action are shown in bold type and hereby presented to the synod's 2023 assembly for adoption in keeping with *S18.12.

6A. Proposed Amendment to a Provision Reclassified from Required to Non-Required

Chapter 7: SYNOD ASSEMBLY

[Provision is no longer required]

~~†S7.21.01.~~ Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until ~~voting members are seated at the opening of~~ the next regular Synod Assembly.

The Constitution Committee recommends this change and presents the following resolution:

Resolved, That S7.21.01 be amended to read, "Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly."

6B. Proposed Amendments to Recommended Provisions

Chapter 7: SYNOD ASSEMBLY

S7.14. ~~One-half~~ One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

The Constitution Committee's position is that this change is not needed because our synod's constitution already says *one-third*.

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of ~~consistent with~~ †S7.21.e.

If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

The Constitution Committee does not consider this change as being needed based on our own current constitution.

- S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

The Constitution Committee recommends this change and presents the following resolution:

Resolved, That S7.24. be amended to read as follows: “Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership.”

- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

The Constitution Committee recommends this change and presents the following resolution:

Resolved, That S7.26. be amended to read as follows: “This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.”

- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the ~~Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~ the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.

The Constitution Committee did not consider this change to be needed.

Chapter 8: OFFICERS

- S8.42.** The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:
[...]

- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.

[...]

- f. ~~Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.~~

The Constitution Committee recommends the adoption of the proposed changes to both c. and f. and, therefore, recommends the following resolution:

Resolved, that S8.42.c. be amended by adding the words “as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.”

Resolved, that S8.42.f. be amended by deleting the words “Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.”

Chapter 11: COMMITTEES (names of other organizational units)

S11.10.—General Provisions

The Constitution Committee recommends adopting this change and presents the following resolution:

Resolved, That constitutional provision S11.10., which reads “General Provisions,” be deleted.

Chapter 14: ROSTERED MINISTERS

- S14.13.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate ~~parochial~~ records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

The Constitution Committee recommends adopting this change and presents the following resolution:

Resolved, That the word *parochial* be deleted from S14.13.

S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ~~his~~ ~~or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

The Constitution Committee recommends that instead of dropping the intent of *his or her* completely, that these words be replaced by *their*. The following resolution is presented:

Resolved, that S14.15. be amended so that it reads, “Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of their ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.”

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ~~his~~ ~~or~~ ~~her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

The Constitution Committee recommends that instead of dropping the intent of *his or her* completely, that these words be replaced by *their*. The following resolution is presented:

Resolved, that S14.34. be amended so that it reads, “Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of their ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.”

FINAL THOUGHTS.

Without taking any action, the committee discussed whether the name of the committee should be kept as *Constitution Committee* or changed to *Good Governance Committee*.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl D. Shankweiler, Chairperson

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF DEANS

The Committee of Deans met frequently since the last synod assembly. They talked frequently about guiding congregations and leaders in the Now Normal.

In October 2022, Muhlenberg College hosted the deans as they held a special luncheon for rostered ministers. Those rostered ministers (and their families) celebrating milestone anniversaries were invited for a meal, program, and pictures.

In advance of the Bishop's conference in November 2022, the deans gave input on what a vital, sustainable Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry program might include.

During Bishop deForest's illness, hospitalization, and recovery, the deans provided additional support in reviewing Parish Study Books and other transitions matters.

The deans heard updates from the spring Conference of Bishops in March 2023 and welcomed Rev. Michael Frost as Interim Dean of the Hazelton-Lehigh Mission District.

The deans plan to meet on the 1st Tuesday every other month, alternating between virtual meeting space and in-person at the Lutheran Center. At each meeting, they also handle routine roster matters and recognitions.

Anniversaries of Rostered Service

2023 marks the 15th anniversary of service for:

Rev. Brian E Beissel
Rev. Brian R Holben
Rev. Elizabeth A Haines
Rev. Jennifer K. Dee

The following leaders are celebrating 25 years of service:

Deacon Kathleen A Yenser
Rev. Alfred A Ruggiero
Rev. Eileen M. Smith LeVan
Rev. John A Hart

Observing their 40th anniversary of ordination are:

Rev. Carl A Wenzel
Rev. Jody L Neifert
Rev. John P Fritch
Rev. Peggy S Pfeffer
Rev. Richard W Schoenleber
Rev. Timothy D Boyer

Celebrating their 50th anniversary of ordained service are:

Rev. Allen L Forsman
Rev. Carl D Shankweiler
Rev. David L Hess
Rev. David P Kidd
Rev. Harry S Bohn, Jr.
Rev. Larry D. Laine
Rev. Lyn L Langkamer
Rev. Robert F Hoenich
Rev. Wayne A Heintzeman

Marking 55 years of rostered ministry are:

Rev. David F Hill
Rev. George G Kinney
Rev. Lynn H Rothrock
Rev. Raymond C Hittinger
Rev. Richard A Mowery

Celebrating their 60th anniversary of ordination are:

Rev. Charles J Orem
Rev. Donald C Simmons
Rev. J Robert Kehrli

Celebrating their 65 years of ordained service are:

Rev. Carl R Schmoyer
Rev. E Frederick Holst
Rev. Kenneth M Trexler
Rev. Rodger A Krause

THE REV. ALLEN LEE FORSMAN, son of Walter A. and Olive Forsman. Forsman, was born on August 26, 1940, in Chicago, IL. He graduated with a B.A. in Elementary Education from North Park College, Chicago, IL, in 1964 and a M.Div. from Pacific Lutheran Seminary, Berkeley, CA, in 1972. He also served as a helicopter pilot in the US Coast Guard from 1964 until 1968.

He was ordained by the Pacific Southwest Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on November 12, 1973, at Good Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran, Ben Lomond, CA. He served the following calls: Good Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran, Ben Lomond, CA (1973-1976); Hope Lutheran, Bowers, PA (1976-1980); and, Contract Chaplain, PA Council of Churches (1985-2018).

Pastor Forsman married Harriet "Hatsie" Elizabeth (Philips) on June 29, 1968. They are the parents of Anna Elizabeth and Christie Ellen.

THE REV. CARL DAVID SHANKWEILER, son of Carl Benfield and Grace Amanda (Starr) Shankweiler, was born on November 23, 1946, in Ashland, PA. He graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a B.A. in History in 1967 and a M.A. in Modern European History in 1971. He earned a M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1972, followed by a Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1973.

He was ordained by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 24, 1973, at St. Luke Lutheran, Reading, PA. Following his ordination, he served the following calls: Pastor, St. James Lutheran, Geigertown, PA (1973-1978); Pastor, Trinity Lutheran, Wernersville, PA (1978-1983); Editor, Division for Parish Services, Lutheran Church in America (1983-1987); Director of Genesis Program, Lutheran Welfare Service, Hazleton, PA (1988-1991); Pastor, Trinity Lutheran, Valley View, PA (1990-2010); Pastor, St. John Lutheran, Friedensburg, PA (2010-2019); and, Zion Lutheran, Frackville, PA (2019-current).

He has also earned his MBA from Bloomsburg University in 1992. Pastor Shankweiler has also served the wider church in various capacities as: Associate of the Bishop, a Board Member of the Lutheran Archives housed at Philadelphia Seminary, and Synod Secretary.

Pastor Shankweiler married Cynthia Louise Rebecca (Herb) on June 23, 1973.

THE REV. DAVID LEITH HESS, son of Edward Leith and Jean (Steigerwalt) Hess, was born on September 12, 1947, in Bethlehem, PA. He graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a B.S. in Wood Science in 1969 and a M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary- Gettysburg Campus) in 1974.

Pastor Hess was ordained by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on July 8, 1973, at New Jerusalem Lutheran, Saucon Valley, PA. Following his ordination, he served the Heidelberg-Slatedale Parish (Heidelberg Lutheran (Union), Slatington, PA, and Holy Trinity Lutheran (Union), Slatedale, PA) from 1973 until 1985. In 1985, the Union configuration at Holy Trinity dissolved. Pastor Hess continued on as pastor to the Heidelberg-Slatedale Lutheran Parish until his retirement in 2015.

Pastor Hess married Linda Louise (Garlin) on September 5, 1970. They are the parents of Nancy Karen, Peter Leith, and Elizabeth Amy.

THE REV. DAVID PAUL KIDD, son of Paul J. and Frances E. (Hoyt) Kidd, was born on May 18, 1947, in Reading, PA. He graduated with a B.A. in Psychology from Muhlenberg College in 1969 and a M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1973.

He was ordained by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on June 10, 1973, at St. Paul Lutheran, Doylestown, PA. He served the following calls: Associate Pastor, Trinity Memorial Lutheran, Allentown, PA (1973-1975); Pastor, Christ

Metz Lutheran, Dryville, PA (1975-1983); St. Paul Lutheran, Trexlertown, PA (1983-2002); and St. Timothy Lutheran, Allentown, PA (2002-2012). Pastor Kidd has also served on Synod ministry teams and as a Bear Creek Camp board member.

Pastor Kidd was married to Elizabeth K. (Coblentz) on December 20, 1969. They are the parents of three children: Megan Elizabeth, Mandi Rebecca, and Molly Abigail. In 1994, he married Deacon Patrice Ann (Young).

THE REV. HARRY STEWART BOHN, JR., son of Harry S. Bohn, Sr. and Anna R. (Wagner) Bohn, was born on February 9, 1947, in West Reading, PA. He graduated from Albright College in 1969 with an A.B. in History and The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1973 with an M.Div.

He was ordained by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 24, 1973, at St. Luke Lutheran, Reading, PA. He served the following calls: Assistant Pastor, Alsace Lutheran, Reading, PA (1973-1975); Associate Pastor, Alsace Lutheran, Reading, PA (1975-1984); Pastor, St. John Lutheran, Sinking Spring, PA (1984-2006); Senior Pastor, St. John Lutheran, Sinking Spring, PA (2006-2012).

Pastor Bohn married Carole E. (Boltz) on July 31, 1970.

THE REV. LARRY DONALD LAINE, son of Lauri M. and Wilma L. Laine, was born of April 30, 1945, in Selma, CA. He graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy from California Lutheran University in 1967 and a M.Div. from Hamma School of Theology in 1972.

Following his ordination in January 1973, he served the following calls: Bethel Lutheran, Templeton, CA (1973-1974); Senior Pastor, St. Andrew Lutheran, San Jose, CA (1974-1976); Interim Pastor, St. Mark Lutheran, Yorktown, VA (2012-2014); Pastor, Trinity Lutheran, Bangor, PA (2015-2022); and Interim Pastor, Jerusalem Lutheran, Schuylkill Haven, PA and St. John, Friedensburg, PA (2022- current).

Pastor Laine married Diane M. (Josephson) on August 26, 1967. They are the parents of three daughters—Karin Marie, Ingrid Johanna, and Britta Mariana.

THE REV. LYN LUTHER LANGKAMER, son of Carl and Grace (Strohl) Langkamer, was born on September 6, 1947, in Lehighton, PA. He graduated from Kutztown State College (now Kutztown University) in 1969 with a B.S. in Secondary Education, focused on Mathematics and German. He graduated with a M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1973.

He was ordained by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 24, 1973, at St. Luke Lutheran, Reading, PA. Following his ordination, he served the North Berks Parish (St. Paul Lutheran, Hamburg and Zion Lutheran, Perry Township) from 1973 until 1980. He served Good Shepherd Lutheran, Kreidersville, PA, from 1980 until 1999. While at Good Shepherd, he served as supervisor to numerous seminary interns.

He then accepted the call as Senior Pastor to St. John Lutheran, Allentown, PA, from 1999 until his retirement in 2009.

Pastor Langkamer married Martha (Jandrisevits) on August 23, 1969. They are the parents of Andrea Marie, Jessica Anne, Rebekah Susan, and Krista Leigh.

THE REV. ROBERT FRANCIS HOENICH, son of Clarence Hoenich, Jr. and Margaret (Kubich) Hoenich, was born on May 13, 1947, in Pottsville, PA. He graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a B.A. in History in 1969 and a M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1973.

He was ordained by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 24, 1973, at St. Luke Lutheran, Reading, PA. He served the following calls: Prince of Peace Lutheran, Johnsonville, PA (1973-1980); St. Peter Lutheran, Pine Grove, PA (1980-2001); and Christ's United Lutheran, Ashland, PA (2001-2010).

Pastor Hoenich married Nan Lois (Yorty) on August 2, 1969. They are the parents of Alethea Lenore, Gwendalin Lois, and Janelle Leigh.

THE REV. WAYNE ARTHUR HEINTZELMAN, son of Wayne P. and Bertha (Williams) Heintzelman was born on May 16, 1947, in Santa Monica, CA. He graduated with a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Franklin and Marshall College in 1969, a M.Div. from The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1973, and a D.Min. in Stewardship from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary-Philadelphia Campus) in 1983.

He was ordained by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America on May 24, 1973, at St. Luke Lutheran, Reading, PA. He served the following calls: Assistant Pastor, Advent Lutheran, West Lawn, PA (1973-1976); Extended Staff, Lutheran Children and Family Services (1974-1976); Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran, Mountain Top, PA (1976-2000); and, St. Daniel Lutheran, Robesonia, PA (2000-2013). After retiring in 2013, he has served the Synod in various interim capacities.

Pastor Heintzelman married Elsa Ruth (Beyer) on May 16, 1970. They are the parents of Joshua Wayne, Joel Robert, and Katherine Laura.

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

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY TEAM

The Leadership Development Ministry Team centers on the following priorities: to identify candidates for lay and rostered leaders in the church, to develop and grow their gifts for ministry and to support them as 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 seven First Call Leaders and their gifts.

In February 2023, we had our first *First Call* gathering in three years, framed by the Noah story in Genesis 6-9.

The 2024 Compensation Guidelines demonstrate a commitment towards equity in deacon compensation. They also include revised and renewed sabbatical guidelines, thoughtfully designed in consultation with other synods, developed by our deans, and strongly endorsed by the Synod Council. The intent and impact of these initiatives is to make the Northeastern Pennsylvania a great and faithful place to serve in ministry!

Consider joining our team as we grow stronger together.

Submitted by,
Rev. Rachael Dietz
Executive Associate of the Bishop for Leadership

CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

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, deacons, and pastors 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.

Our Synod currently has twelve candidates for both rosters at varying stages of the candidacy process and four inquirers. We ask that you and your worshipping 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.

Rev. Jennifer Heavner, Chair

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. We look forward to expanding our team.

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. 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

MISSION INTERPRETATION MINISTRY

The Mission Interpretation Ministry shares stories and communicates with congregations on how we are using our hands to do God's work. Visits are to say thank you and help congregations understand how their Mission Support commitments fulfill many ministries. Presentations to congregational councils and stewardship committees are available to show them ways to use a mission interpreter in their congregation to support their commitments to mission support.

Charlotte Gross and Georgia Suranofsky work together to coordinate the ministry. Charlotte focuses on the East Berks, Lehigh and Northern Lehigh Mission Districts. Georgia is providing support for the other districts. Presentations suitable during sermon time are also provided during pastoral vacancies or vacations.

A change has been made in how stories are shared. Beginning in January, a story is shared each month in the Synod News from the synod ministries or ELCA ministries. We also share stories from grants that were given from the Witness and Service Team Ministry.

The 5G Network (new name for the Mission Support Table) provides guidance for the Mission Interpretation Ministry. The 5 G's stand for **Growing Grateful Generous Givers Group**. Both Charlotte and Georgia are members of the network.

Our annual "thank you" note to congregations for their mission support giving contained two amazing stories about Camp Noah and Good Shepherd Rehabilitation. Debbie Skinner, Mission Support Coordinator for the Synod works with us to prepare the records to send this communication and is a member of the 5G Network.

In January we provided a workshop on how to share stories at the Extravaganza on congregational vitality and the spirit of generosity which was held jointly with the Southeastern PA Synod.

We meet virtually with the ELCA Mission Support Team to share ideas and learn more about the ministries we support and continue with storytelling engagement.

Submitted by:
Georgia Suranofsky
Charlotte Gross
Mission Interpretation Coordinators

DEM REPORT

Grace be with you! My name is Kat Tigerman and I am the new Director for Evangelical Mission (or DEM for short) for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. I am an ELCA Deacon, an LDA Deaconess, and also an IBCLC (International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant). I come to you with a background working in churches, grass-roots ministries, and faith-based non-profits, and am excited to apply those skills in this new role.

As we look back over the previous year as a synod, we give our thanks to Rev. Mike Ben-nethum for all his work for the synod and his many hats, including that of the DEM. I am personally grateful for his support during this transition and we wish him blessings as he transitions into retirement.

We lift up the work of the Witness and Service ministry teams – the Green Team working on our relationship with creation; the Racial Justice team working on our relationships with one another, especially with people we have historically marginalized; the LGBTQIA+ team engaging and encouraging congregations in their work of becoming Reconciling in Christ communities; and the Witness and Service team which has provided four grants to support new ministries and collaborative ministry projects since the 2022 Synod Assembly. To learn more about the good work of each of these teams, please read their individual team reports or reach out to the team leader or myself.

We also lift up our Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities: Common Ground and Hope's Table. Common Ground Recovery Community continues to provide recovery support programs, small groups, a community meal known as Fellowship Supper, and worship that incorporates the 12-steps and reminds us we are all broken and in need of a Savior. To find out more please visit their website at <https://cgrcommunity.org/> or speak with Pastor Tom Scornavacchi. Hope's Table provides a weekly community meal followed by eucharistic worship, where all are welcomed to God's table and reminded that our daily bread flows from that holy table. To learn more please visit their website at <http://www.jcishope.org/> or speak with Pastor Mary Wolfe.

As we look forward, I am eager to meet with each of your congregations and ministry sites. It is my goal to visit each of your sites by the time we gather for our next Synod Assembly! I am excited to learn more about your ministries, the needs in your communities, your partnerships, your energy around how the Spirit is stirring, and how I can best support you on your walk with God in loving your neighbors.

We are entering a time for intentional discernment – to evaluate where we are as we move beyond Covid-19, as we may notice new opportunities for ministry, and as we begin envisioning and reimagining what future God is calling us into. Some of us may be daunted by this task as we learn to live into new realities, as we process our grief, and as we search for what comes next. Some of us may be overjoyed to lean into a new normal, to gather in new and old ways, and to reengage in the work of healing the hurt, loving the land, and engaging the stranger. Wherever you are on this journey, the synod is here to support you. Please don't hesitate to reach out; part of my role as the DEM is to support you in exactly this discernment as well as your current and big-dream ministries.

As we continue to live into the mission of Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life, you will be in my prayers. I am honored to join with you in this important, transformational work so that all can experience God's love.

Grace upon grace,
Deacon Kat Tigerman

WITNESS AND SERVICE MINISTRY TEAM

Every year, the Witness and Service Ministry Team provides grants to congregations, ministries, and ministry partners who are seeking to try new ministry projects for the sake of sharing the Gospel through loving service. This can take many forms – so we encourage you to apply and consider whom you could partner with in your own community!

For the last half of 2022, the Witness and Service team awarded a grant to Prince of Peace, Johnsonville for their “Walkway to Outdoor Worship” project. This project was designed to incorporate the Synod’s Vital Signs for Now of Loving the Land, Healing the Hurt, and Engaging the Stranger by sharing the blessing of the church’s beautiful wooded area with all and by providing an easy access point into worship.

So far in 2023, the Witness and Service Team has awarded grants for Racial Justice Training across the synod; to Holy Trinity Memorial Lutheran, Catasauqua to launch an after-school program for 1st-4th graders; and to the Northwest Reading Lutheran Cooperative to provide intentional summer youth programming.

Racial Justice Training will continue to be available to those in the synod, with another round happening this fall. Holy Trinity’s programming will include incorporating the fine arts, music, dance, acting, storytelling, Bible class, homework help, and social-emotional learning classes. The Northwest Reading Cooperative’s programming is designed to provide affordable and safe places for children during the summer as a means of providing childcare relief to grandparents as well as an opportunity to share God’s love with kids in the community and build leadership skills among young adults.

The Witness and Service Ministry Team is excited to hear the reports of these projects later in 2023 and the relationships formed through such witness to Jesus’ love and care of the neighbor!

In total, the Team awarded \$11,500.00 in ministry grants since the 2022 Synod Assembly.

Hope’s Table, Reading received an ELCA Domestic Hunger grant for 2023-2025, which will provide \$10,000 each year, for the three-year cycle. The Hunger Team, which helps distribute ELCA Domestic Hunger grants in our synod is looking for additional members. If you are interested in joining, please reach out to Eileen Smith LeVan at: bellhog@gmail.com.

We pray God’s blessings upon all these ministries and the ministries yet to come!

Kat Tigerman
DEM

GREEN TEAM REPORT

The synod's Green Team (formerly the Creation Care Task Force) has continued its work to help all pastors, congregations, and individuals within the synod care for God's creation as an outgrowth of our faith. We meet every couple of months over Zoom (which is both convenient and effective in terms of time and energy use); anyone is welcome to participate in our meetings.

We have so far produced a full year of our quarterly/seasonal e-newsletter. It includes environmental tips, creation-focused prayers, an introduction to a local natural site, book reviews, and an inspirational story from a congregation within the synod, and all are available on the synod's website at <https://nepasynod.org/green-team/>.

We also try to have at least one in-person event annually; in 2022 we had a small gathering at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and in 2023 we are planning on a 'creeking' event geared towards children. We'll also have a presence at the synod assembly.

Possible future projects 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 other synod gatherings, and assistance with energy audits and grant requests for congregations. If you would be interested in becoming part of a team or would like help 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 to all those who have participated in the last year!

Submitted by

Paul Metzloff

LAMPa REPORT

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 is a shared ministry of seven Pennsylvania synods, ELCA Service and Justice, and Pennsylvania ELCA agencies and institutions. Through LAMPa, Lutherans called to be part of God's healing and reconciling mission in the world 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 43 years of advocacy ministry that supported and deepened your congregational efforts to address hunger, poverty, health care, civic engagement, housing and homelessness, 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 and access to health care as the nation emerged from pandemic. In the midst of a nationwide housing crisis, your advocacy through LAMPa lifted the cap on funding for the state housing trust fund, which Lutherans helped create more than a decade ago, and won passage of a Whole-Home Repairs law, a first-of-its kind program that will help preserve its aging housing stock, increase energy efficiency, and help keep Pennsylvanians, particularly seniors, in their homes. Your care for creation was turned into bipartisan support for investments in environmental conservation and protection for clean streams at a time when one third of the state's waterways has been deemed impaired.

In its work of equipping disciples, growing leaders and supporting vital congregations, LAMPa with the Homeless Remembrance Blanket Project on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, soliciting and delivering invitations from ELCA-affiliated ministries around the country to members of Congress to visit and learn from their work with neighbors experiencing homelessness. LAMPa continues to educate faithful advocates through our website, e-news and other resources. LAMPa supported congregations in adding advocacy to their service on God's work. Our hands. Sunday and participated in the ULS spring convocation. LAMPa staff continues to serve in consultation to the ELCA task force developing the social statement on Faith and Civic Life, and urges all to devote time to the newly released study and to offer feedback.

We give thanks to God for you and for the support of our Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Policy Council representatives, the Rev. D. Michael Bennethum and Vicar Dillon Eppler.

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

Tracey DePasquale
LAMPa Director



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Partners in Ministry,

For many of us, 2022 represented a moment of hope. After the darkness and isolation of the pandemic, life has begun to return to normal—offering new opportunities for connection and renewed commitment to serving our neighbor.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has embraced this moment; in the past year, we have grown exponentially in both size and scale, expanding our capacity to welcome immigrants and refugees.

With the help of people of faith and communities like yours, we were able to...

- help **16,690 children** reunify with their families or find safe, loving foster homes
- resettle nearly **12,000 Afghans** forced to flee after Afghanistan fell under Taliban control
- welcome **3,169 refugees** from countries across the world
- assist **18,262 people** seeking safety from Central America and beyond

We continue to expand our slate of innovative programming to move beyond traditional resettlement into an empowered living experience that promotes not just surviving, but thriving.

That work reaches, too, into our media and advocacy footprint. You may have seen LIRS President and CEO Krish O'Mara Vignarajah on national news programs like *PBS Newshour*, *MSNBC*, *NPR*, the *BBC*, and others, advocating on behalf of our immigrant and refugee neighbors from Ukraine to Venezuela.

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

It remains a priority of ours in 2023 to combat the divisive, xenophobic rhetoric surrounding immigration and instead promote kindness, compassion, and inherent human dignity.

We invite you to join us in that work! This year, we will continue to offer opportunities to get involved in the work of welcome, including:

- advocating alongside LIRS and our newest neighbors in celebration of [World Refugee Day](#) on June 20th,
- sharing notes of welcome with children and families impacted by immigration detention through LIRS' [Hope for the Holidays™ program](#) each fall,
- and equipping leaders and faith communities to create more just and welcoming communities through the [LIRS Ambassador Network](#) and [EMMAUS Network for Congregations](#) throughout the year.

Together, we can realize Jesus's ministry of compassion and welcome. We're so grateful for your support and look forward to working alongside you in the coming year.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsey Johnson".

Chelsey Johnson, LIRS Mobilization and Faith Relations



The Mission Investment Fund: Your financial partner

The **Mission Investment Fund**, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals. MIF offers a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including outdoor camps, senior housing and social service agencies.



The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities: Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

Why is MIF the right choice?

- **MIF has demonstrated expertise** in church and ministry financing. With longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions.
- **We consistently offer competitive rates and terms.**
- **We offer a full suite of financial services.** MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. We work in deep partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union to offer a wide range of financial products and services.
- **The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans.** The money invested in MIF finances hundreds of capital projects across the church.

MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability. At year-end 2022, MIF had 812 loans outstanding, totaling \$582.7 million. Investment obligations totaled \$559.4 million. With total assets of \$776.3 million and net assets of \$202.9 million at year-end 2022, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.14 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you minister to a world in need. We are honored to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

MIF at work in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (as of December 31, 2022):

- 8 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$2,112,695
- \$10,918,922 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager Richard Eatman, Jr: 813-245-6195 richard.eatman@elca.org



ELCA Federal Credit Union

***Providing a full complement of financial services
to ELCA members, congregations and ministries***



The ELCA Federal Credit Union, founded in 2016, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. **We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals.**

The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. And now, we provide home mortgage loans for new homes or remodeling, along with home equity lines of credit.

We serve ministries with deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our new CU@Work program presents the opportunity for ministry organizations to offer our Credit Union products and services to their employees.

In 2022, we ushered in the fourth cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those funds up to an established amount. Together, we already have served **657 rostered ministers** who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect today.

Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

- **The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship.** We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.
- **Our mission is to offer competitively priced products and services.** We can often offer better rates and lower fees than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our borrowers.
- **With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.**

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, elcafcu.org or call us at toll free at 877-715-1111.

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Recently, in preparation for a Board of Director's meeting we received a gift of confirmation for why it is so important that the Pennsylvania Council of Churches exists. Upon answering the phone call a caller on the other end asked: "how do you feel about the way the Jews and 'niggers' are dividing this country." When I heard it the first time, I thought that I misheard the caller. So I twice asked him to repeat what he said, the same question was forthcoming.

This call produced sadness, alarm, and anxiety, all at the same time. It was a reminder that our faith journeys and ecumenical commitment are grounded in the real-life challenges facing our nation and congregations. As a people we face communities that are divided, strife torn and filled with contempt for those who are "othered."

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is organized to create a space for faith communities to organize, strategize, and engage in common ministry. This continues to be a challenging time of transition for the Council and in this context, we are all being challenged to transform the way that we do our work if we are to exist in the future and remain relevant.

Programs

The Council of Churches sponsored a workshop and panel discussion on Christian Nationalism that was held at the Cumberland Avenue United Church of Christ. Our keynote speaker, Robert Jones, author of White Too Long, unpacked the theology behind Christian nationalism as a vessel for white supremacy, xenophobia and anti-LGBTQI+ sentiment. This discussion was well received by pastors and academics. We anticipate doing these type of forums in the coming year around themes of community interest and importance.

We have provided significant accompaniment to the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in its quest to receive reparations. In 1957 Bethel Church had its property taken by eminent domain. The Church was not adequately compensated for the property and was forced to move. Bethel began seeking reparations from the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Penguins Hockey Club which owns development rights in the area where Bethel Church was previously located. The church is negotiating reparative steps with the Penguins that will include economic development and a relocation of the church to the Lower Hill District of Pittsburgh. The pastor of Bethel Rev. Dr. David Snyder and I did a presentation on Bethel's story in a workshop at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. This is an exciting ecumenical effort that has involved my ecumenical and interfaith partners.

Development

One of the realities of our times is that we are facing shrinking dollars that communions can make available for ecumenical endeavors. Therefore it is incumbent upon the Council

(Continued on page 51)

of Churches to create opportunities for fund development. I see this happening through fundraising, grant writing- seeking both government grants and foundation support. We are also exploring ways to offer estate planning opportunities.

Program Development

Program Development is critical to the future of the Council of Churches. There has to be intentional work done to develop programs and initiatives that are responsive to community and congregational needs and realities. Looking forward the Council seeks to create a program staff position that would enable the Council to create and sustain programs that further promote its ministry and footprint throughout the Commonwealth.

Social Media and Web Footprint

It will be important for the Council of Churches to develop its Website by making it more contemporary and interactive for the public. We need a redesign of our website and a greater social media footprint. Staffing this initiative will be important for us as we consider our ability to share our story.

Interfaith Relationships

The world of "othering" in which we live requires the Council to begin conversations and create relationships with people of other faiths. The Council will take the lead in developing interfaith prayer experiences and conversations designed to create understanding between Christians and people of other faith communities. We will explore the potential of having board members from interfaith communities, and other settings; this will enhance our opportunities for dialogue and the ability to work across the barriers that often separate our faith communities. This is also how we all can work together to combat the evil and sin that plagues our world.

The Future Has to Be Creative

Our future calls us to be creative and think outside of the box, as we consider the future use of our assets, our mission, and the way in which we order the life of the Council. There is a great deal of potential in the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

Blacks and Jews are not dividing our country, but hatred is, fueled by antisemitism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, and othering. It is incumbent upon the Council of Churches to strike a blow against hatred and division. We celebrate our partnership with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America . We join you in enabling the people of God embrace ministry in a 21st century world. We are the light that the world has been waiting for, we will allow it shine as we all boldly show the way.

Larry D. Pickens,
Executive Director



GROWING YOUNG

godslove.org/growingyoung

When you think about the words “Growing Young” in regards to the church, what comes to mind? You may picture a group of youth wearing matching t-shirts returning from a mission trip. You may hear sounds of laughter, music, and prayer echoing through the Sunday School hallways. Or maybe you see a youth group with their arms around each other in a big circle swaying and singing a hymn. Can you picture Growing Young without youth?

The pandemic has hurt us in many ways including church participation of individuals and families especially youth and young adults. As the Growing Young coordinator, I hear time and time again, we need more youth and young people. If we could only hire a younger pastor or youth director, they will attract younger families. How can we get more young people in our church building? These questions are valid, but the answers are not always easy to hear.

The definition of the word “grow” is undergoing natural development by increasing in size and changing physically. A butterfly cannot become its beautiful self without first being a caterpillar. A flower cannot bloom without first being a seed. Our Savior could not die for our sins without first being a baby, teenager and then a man. Growth is part of life.

Change is not easy and is a gradual process. Change can often feel like “mini deaths.” It takes “mini deaths” and change to create new life. The 6 core characteristics of Growing Young teach how to adapt gradually and transform a congregation all while circling around a Jesus-centered community. However, you are never alone on this journey. Not only am I here to empower you along the way, but God will always be with you. God’s trust is all the power you need to make the intentional decision to Grow Young. Are you ready?

There are various ways to begin your Growing Young journey. You can start by having me, the Growing Young coordinator, come out to your congregation on a Sunday morning, a council or committee meeting, or virtually to present a short Growing Young presentation. If you are looking for a more in-depth conversation, consider a half day

Growing Young retreat where we can dive deeper into each core characteristic. Looking for a community of Growing Young seekers? Attend an upcoming SowSession, which is a community of individuals looking to take the Growing Young concept into action throughout our synod and beyond. All this information and more resources can be found at god-slove.org/growingyoung

Submitted by
Stacey Burke
Growing Young Coordinator

FAITH FORMATION RESOURCE MINISTRY TEAM

The past year has had its highs and lows, as most years do, but we are doing our best to move beyond the pandemic.

Our biggest high was having an in-person Learning Ministries Day!! This was especially joyous since we had to cancel last year's event. We met at Hope, Cherryville, and, while the numbers were lower than before the pandemic, we still had a good number of people attend the event. Bishop deForest even came for part of the day to see the keynote speech and meet with some of the participants. The entire team is happy that we are back live and looks forward to larger numbers next year, as this year's participants share their experiences with people in their home congregations. A special thank you goes to Hope, Cherryville, for hosting the event.

We completed our Faith Formation Saturday events in November and are not planning to continue the programs. Interest had declined during the second half of the year.

We will be having a special one-day event, "Resourcing the Resource Center" on Saturday, April 29, 9:00 – 12:00, at the Lutheran Center. This event will allow participants to visit the Resource Center and attend two workshops: "Bringing New Life to Old Resources" and "Technology and Updating Resources." It promises to be an informative day.

Work on the Resource Center is continuing, as we check every shelf to see that all the resources have been entered into the computer, are able to be signed out, and have their locations listed. This is proving to be a larger job than expected, as the Center contains more than 15,000 items. We urge everyone who looks at the on-line catalog to not assume that that is all the items we have. More items are still being entered every week. Call the Synod Office to find out for sure. There is someone in the Center every Wednesday from 10:00 – noon to help anyone looking for resources.

Our team is willing to resume congregational visits, offering our help to any group that may want to explore new ideas and options. We are dedicated to spreading our knowledge of Faith Formation to everyone.

Cheryl Statham
Convenor

LGBTQIA+

As a Reconciling in Christ Synod, we can firmly agree with Reconciling Works values, missions and specifically their vision which currently states, "To keep expanding the welcome, liberating those who are forced to live in the margins. To keep dismantling barriers and building bridges. To keep working until all of God's beloved have equity." So how are we as a synod and LGBTQIA+ community taking these statements in action?

In the past year, the LGBTQIA+ community have gotten together to show a presence at local Pride events within our synod's boundaries. At these festivals we promoted our synod's congregations who have gone through the Reconciling in Christ process, shared ways on how to become a RIC congregation to intentionally state all are welcomed and loved plus handed out fun items such as buttons, colored bracelets for all gender identities and fans to cool down on the hot day. These items helped build conversation full of love, faith, friendship and acceptance.

We Love was an event hosted early November at the Lutheran Center helping educate congregations on building a safer and more welcoming community for LGBTQIA+ youth and families. The keynote speaker was Ross Murray who is an ordained deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with a calling to advocate for LGBTQ people and to bridge the LGBTQ and faith communities. In addition to Ross Murray, the event had workshops such as LGBT 101, Trauma, Beyond the Binary and Advanced Level Worship.

It is now 2023 and our goals are to build a wider loving community by expanding our presence at Pride events and locations, continue to promote congregations to become Reconciling in Christ and educate and support. We are excited to announce our two new co-convenors Dr. Helen H. Davis and the Rev. Thomas Busted. Helen is an Associate Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at Wilkes University and an active member in various LGBTQ+ outlets and committees locally. Pastor Tom is the called minister at Zion, Old Zionsville and has participated in the synod's growing LGBTQIA+ community and events.

If you would like to join the LGBTQIA+ community, contact Helen Davis (co-convenor), Pastor Tom Busted (co-convenor), Stacey Burke (staff liaison) or Eric Gombert (staff liaison).

Submitted by
Stacey Burke,
staff liaison.

RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM

Background: 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. Deaconess Deborah Matern Graf and Pastor Suzanne Trump agreed to be co-conveners.

Visioning for our work together, the RJT discerned that the focus of this group would be

- 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

Work since June 2022: At the 2022 Synod Assembly, a resolution was put forth by the Racial Justice Team (RJT) with the goal of establishing a requirement for Racial Justice/Anti-Racism training for Rostered Ministers and Synod Authorized Lay Ministers at least every three years. The resolution also stated that the Office of the Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, in partnership with the Racial Justice Team, will offer at least one Racial Justice/Anti-Racism Training workshop every two to three years at the same cost or less to participants as Boundary Training. This resolution was not heard at the Assembly. However, it was remanded to Synod Council where at the July 24, 2022 meeting it was read, discussed and voted upon; it passed unanimously.

The RJT then set out to find a facilitator and schedule dates and locations for the training to take place in early 2023. After some members of the Team attended an online training session, it was decided to employ the skills of The Rev. Carla Christopher, an Assistant to the Bishop in the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Among other roles, she serves as the primary Racial Justice curriculum developer and trainer for ELCA's Region 8. The RJT copied the model previously used for Synod boundary training – sessions scheduled for three separate dates in three different regions of the Synod, in order to accommodate as many individuals as possible.

The three trainings were offered and held as follows:

- Wednesday 1/11/2023, 9 am - 3 pm at St. Paul's Lutheran, Dallas PA
- Thursday 1/12/2023, 9 am - 3 pm at Bern Lutheran, Leesport PA
- Saturday 2/11, 2023, 9 am - 3 pm St. John's Lutheran, Nazareth PA
-

Some prework in the form of videos was sent out ahead of time to all registered participants. In addition to a \$25 registration fee, the funds for lunches, the speaker's fee, and other expenses came from a \$2500 grant from the Witness and Service Committee. Lori Christman and Eric Gombert of Synod Staff were of great help with finances and the online registration process. Many thanks to our host locations as well. Overall, the sessions were very well received. The team gathered a list of comments and suggestions about how to proceed in the future.

Next, the RJT hopes to schedule a second set of training sessions in Fall 2023, in order to

accommodate rostered ministers who were not able to attend any of the first sessions, as well as lay leaders. The team will continue to evaluate and offer resources on the synod website, as well as hold in-person events. We plan to work closely with the Synod LGBTQ Task Force as well.

Lastly, the Racial Justice Team wishes to thank The Rev. Suzanne Trump for her service as co-convenor. She has worked tirelessly and with great dedication to fight injustice and prejudice, both as a member of this team and in other community organizations. She will be deeply missed.

If this is a ministry that interests you, please contact any of the members of our team:

Brian Beissel, Kaitlyn Blend, Colleen Cox, Samantha Drennan (co-convenor), Deborah Graf (co-convenor), Brandon Heavner, Jennifer Hall, Mike Bennethum, or Kat Tigerman (staff liaison).

2024 MINIMUM COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

ROSTERED PASTORS 2024 Minimum Salary Guidelines

These guidelines represent a 3% increase over 2023.

Resolved that:

1) The 2024 *minimum base salary* for Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors) in the North-eastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:

Years completed Service in ordained Ministry	2024 Recommended Salary Range (including housing allowance)		2024 Recommended Salary Range (parsonage provided)	
	Low	High	Low	High
0-1	60,807	66,910	42,261	46,488
2-3	62,152	67,854	43,607	47,976
4-7	63,500	69,850	44,960	49,452
8-10	66,157	72,813	47,662	52,418
11-15	68,217	81,860	49,673	54,639
16-20	71,585	85,901	52,002	62,403
21+	74,954	97,441	56,411	73,334

**** This is base compensation; total compensation includes benefits.****

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 need to 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 2024, 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 \$600 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time with Sundays (not vacation), and the pastor providing at least \$300. 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 \$1,200.

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

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

10) Congregations are encouraged to engage in a **sabbatical** practice, in accordance with the Synod's sabbatical guidelines. These times of rest are for the building up of the rostered minister and the strengthening of congregational leadership. The rostered minister is expected to remain at the place of call at least a year following a sabbatical.

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 2024 Minimum Salary Guidelines

Beginning in 2017, all deacons entering the candidacy process for the Word and Service roster are required to earn at least one Master's level theological degree. They also need to complete Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) as well as an 1,000 hour internship. Additionally, deacons have been historically underpaid relative to pastors. These 2024 guidelines move towards more equitable compensation.

Resolved that:

1) The 2024 *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 or- dained ministry	2024 Recommended Salary Range With Bachelor's Degree		2024 Recommended Salary Range With Master's Degree	
	Low	High	Low	High
0-1	45,034	49,589	52,431	57,684
2-3	46,731	51,318	54,494	59,686
4-7	48,164	52,980	55,892	61,482
8-10	51,025	56,134	58,671	64,558
11-15	53,182	63,817	60,790	72,947
16-20	56,765	67,684	64,287	77,143
21+	60,350	78,457	67,785	88,121

**** This is base compensation; total compensation includes benefits.****

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 need to 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 \$600 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time with Sundays (not vacation), and the deacon providing at least \$300. Programs that include Sundays need to be negotiated with the congregation council/board. It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and pastors work towards a partnership goal of \$1,200.

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

4) 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.

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

6) **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.**

7) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, deacons are considered to be employees of the congregation; therefore, they are to be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.

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

9) Congregations are encouraged to engage in a **sabbatical** practice, in accordance with the Synod's sabbatical guidelines. These times of rest are for the building up of the rostered minister and the strengthening of congregational leadership. The rostered minister is expected to remain at the place of call at least a year following a sabbatical.

SABBATICAL RESOURCE PAPER

History—In 1990, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod ELCA enacted sabbatical guidelines of 12 weeks paid leave for the rostered minister (deacon or pastor) after 7 years of service in a particular call. While admirable in nature and consistent with the Lutheran theological tradition, in the 33 years since adoption, those guidelines have become a document of aspiration rather than reality. The average call for a rostered minister is now between 5 and 7 years, so few qualify before they change positions. Three months away may also be a difficult obstacle, whether in the logistics of finding supply ministers or convincing leadership of a sabbatical's mutual renewal. This new reimagining aims to lower the barriers, thereby equipping the saints for ministry and building up the Body of Christ (see *Ephesians 4:12*).

Theology—Sabbath time, a time of rest, is crucial to being faithful servants of God. God commanded the Israelites to remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy (Exodus 20:8-11). God calls to us through the Psalmist, saying, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). When Jesus saw his disciples weary and tired, he called them to "come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). Indeed, Jesus called all God's children to rest in him, saying, "come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). We are told that rest is so important that at the time of creation, God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2).

It can be difficult for many in our age to honor this blessing, indeed this command, to rest. Our culture encourages us to work harder and harder, to be available 24/7. Yet we know that constant work does not lead to good emotional, physical, or spiritual health (nor does it even yield the most productive work). The church is called to speak against this cultural trend, to boldly proclaim that God calls us to a healthy balance of work and rest, of busyness and sabbath.

Rostered ministers (deacons and pastors) in the church are not exempt from the challenge. Burnout is common. As deans, we see the struggles our colleagues face. The various needs of congregations and ministry sites, coupled with a sense of isolation, easily lead clergy to refrain from taking time off. It is crucial, though, that rostered ministers work to practice a regular Sabbath routine, for at least three reasons:

First, it is crucial for their own sake. Rostered ministers are first and foremost children of God, and God promises to take care of them and carry their burdens. As God's people, rostered ministers need wholeness and healing.

Second, it is crucial for the sake of their ministry. A burned-out leader accomplishes less. The most effective leadership and ministry is done by leaders who are healthy, who work toward balanced self-care.

Third, it is crucial because rostered ministers are role models in the faith. By modeling self-care, leaders show and tell congregations that God desires a balanced life for all,

a life which includes Sabbath and self-care. Many people need to hear that message, and rostered ministers can offer it through their choices and behaviors.

Therefore, we urge rostered ministers to nurture a healthy Sabbath lifestyle, to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them, and to set and keep appropriate boundaries. We also urge congregations and organizations who call rostered ministers to provide appropriate opportunities for Sabbath time, and to hold their leaders accountable to taking advantage of these opportunities.

In the church, we understand time as a rhythm, a series of concentric circles of days, weeks, seasons, and years. As such, we suggest that Sabbath time be rhythmic as well, with varying levels of rest. Some specific recommendations follow.

- DAILY: We encourage rostered ministers to make time for rest in each day, through daily prayer, devotion, and play.
- WEEKLY: The current “Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers,” approved by the Northeastern PA Synod Assembly, encourages congregations to provide “One to two days off per week, and at least once a month, two consecutive days off.” We urge rostered ministers to take these days off, and not simply for sermon writing.
- YEARLY: “Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers” encourages congregations to provide “four full weeks of vacation annually.” We urge rostered ministers to take these four weeks, including four Sundays.
- LONG-TERM: We encourage rostered ministers and congregations to seriously consider taking on a model of *Sabbatical*. This model suggests that when a leader has served in a particular place for a certain amount of time, that leader takes a substantial amount of time off for spiritual growth, reflection, and recuperation. This document outlines such a model for congregational consideration.

We commend these recommendations to all rostered ministers, Mutual Ministry committees, congregations and calling institutions throughout our synod.

Technology as Tool—Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, congregations embraced technologies that gave permission to experiment with worship. The use of Zoom, FaceBook, YouTube, and other online technologies enabled ministry sites and rostered ministers to continue worshipping throughout the pandemic successfully. An added bonus is that many congregations are reaching members and non-members who would normally not be able to participate in worship— those who have gone south for the winter, those who are homebound, far-flung family members, etc. – all of whom can now attend and participate in worship. This very same technology can now be deployed to provide Sunday worship coverage for congregations during a rostered minister’s sabbatical leave. While we anticipate technology to change and adapt over time, here are a few possibilities as of February 2023:

First, congregations whose pastor or deacon is on vacation could be linked in remotely with another local congregation each Sunday morning of a sabbatical. Pro-

jections of a worship service could serve any number of congregations locally or even at a distance.

Second, for those congregations that wish to use lay leadership for the worship service, but who might be struggling to provide meaningful sermon material, there are options. The Synod already has manuscript sermons available. Additionally, some pastors preach a sermon series at different times of the year. Some pastors may have developed a sermon series on the Ten Commandments or on the Articles of the Creed or on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Perhaps another pastor has developed a sermon series on discipleship highlighting a different disciple each week. We could also invite someone to develop a digital bank of downloadable sermons.

We encourage congregations to seek out other arrangements that work for them, such as:

- Temporary yoking with a local sister congregation for live worship; temporary pastoral sharing
- Highlight a different ministry partner each week (Bear Creek, seminary, Muhlenberg College, local Social Service agency)
- Inviting a Mission Interpreter (Synod Storyteller) to come preach
- Arrangements for pastoral care from a local pastoral colleague.

The world needs adaptive, nimble, curious, resilient, and courageous rostered ministers, along with the ministries they serve. Proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ through the Spirit in word and deed is life-changing, transforming, and saving work. The Lutheran emphasis on grace provides a powerful antidote to our status driven culture. We aim to make sabbatical leave possible, attainable, and beneficial for everyone, in every setting, no matter the size or configuration!

Your co-workers in the Gospel,
The Committee of Deans
February 2023

SABBATICAL PROVISIONS FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS (Deacons and Pastors)

Definition

A sabbatical **is** an intentional time for enrichment and renewal—
whereby a rostered minister may focus on praying, studying, resting, reflecting, exploring, researching, writing, and preparing for future ministry;
and,
whereby the congregation or ministry site(s) may focus on gifts, leadership development,

and holy imagination.

A sabbatical in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod *is not*:
solely a vacation;
time for routine work;
time for searching for a new call or a new career;
retirement planning;
or, for the rostered minister alone.

Sabbaticals encourage longer pastorates and calls, spur creativity and curiosity, contribute to the continued spiritual growth of faith leaders, allow ministry to be refreshed and refocused, help prevent vocational burnout, and strengthen a congregation's/ministry site's identity apart from the rostered minister.

Policy Details

Every four (4) years of a rostered minister's call, four (4) weeks are earned toward a rostered minister's sabbatical time. No more than twelve weeks of sabbatical time over the course of twelve years may be accrued. The rostered minister is expected to remain in the same call at least one year beyond any sabbatical time taken. The rostered minister may take their earned sabbatical time at any point after four years of service in conversation with the congregation's Council.

Year Four of Service in a Call = 4 Weeks Earned

Year Eight of Service in a Call = 4 Weeks Earned (8 Weeks accrued if a sabbatical was not taken earlier)

Year Twelve of Service in a Call = 4 Weeks Earned (12 Weeks accrued if a sabbatical was not taken earlier)

- * The sabbatical's focus will be developed in consort with the congregation council or calling institution (ministry site).
- * The congregation is expected to enter into a time of study and renewal concurrent with and possibly complementary of the rostered minister's sabbatical. Resources are available from the Synod for congregational use.
- * Sabbatical time is in addition to vacation and continuing education.
- * An appropriate amount of notification should be provided to the ministry site when scheduling the sabbatical.
- * Full salary, health, and benefits (normal compensation) will be paid during the rostered minister's sabbatical by the ministry site.
- * Arrangement of pastoral coverage during the sabbatical will be the responsibility of the congregation council (whether a supply pastor is invited, a lay minister is available, a local pastor is shared, or a resource supplied by the Synod is utilized).

- * Costs of the sabbatical (costs of courses, travel, and/or other sabbatical needs) will be paid by the rostered minister, or may be a shared expense in negotiation with the ministry site.
- * The rostered minister and the ministry site will notify the Synod when a sabbatical has been agreed upon.
- * Upon a sabbatical's completion, the rostered minister will provide an account to the congregation's Council/calling institution and to the Synod. This summary should address these questions:
 1. What was the nature of your sabbatical?
 2. What expectations did you fulfill during the sabbatical (including skills and knowledge acquired if applicable)?
 3. How is what you have gained during your sabbatical going to impact your ministry?
 4. What suggestions do you have for those who will take a sabbatical in the future?

BEAR CREEK CAMP



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.

In the Summer of 2022, we were excited to continue overnight camp ministry for youth and families with limited restrictions. The Bear Creek Camp experience focuses on the value of small group programming, empowering our young adult summer staff as facilitators and mentors, and intentionally welcoming and accepting all as we do the important work of building positive community within our borders and equipping our campers to do likewise – to Go Beyond! - when they return to their homes. This past summer, we were able to welcome 795 youth and family campers to camp with over 40% of those campers experiencing camp for the first time. We continue to serve our local community through our Nature Day Camp with 193 participants throughout the summer. 45 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 as we continue to rebuild from the two years of reduced programs. 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 synods' 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. With over 2100 individuals attending events and retreats outside of our summer camp programs, the amount of lives that are positively impacted directly and indirectly through a Bear Creek Camp experience is overwhelming!

(Continued on page 68)

(Continued from page 67)

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. We look forward to seeing you all at camp soon!

Respectfully submitted,
Collin Grooms
Executive Director
www.bearcreekcamp.org

LUTHERAN ARCHIVES CENTER AT PHILADELPHIA

The synod's constitution calls for the synod to provide "archives in conjunction with other synods" (*S6.03.01.) and states that "at the time of the closure of a congregation, [the congregation's] records shall be sent to the regional archives" (*S14.21.). Through our constitution, the preservation of our synod's and our congregations' records is recognized as being important, no matter if the records were touched by H. M. Muhlenberg himself in the eighteenth century or if those records tell of a baptism that took place in 2023.

In the case of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, our archives "in conjunction with other synods" is located on the Philadelphia campus of the United Lutheran Seminary. The Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia is governed by a board of directors that includes several persons from this synod: the Rev. Virginia Biniek, who is the secretary of the board; the Rev. Richard Baumann; and the Rev. Carl Shankweiler, vice president. Also attending several board meetings this past year was the Rev. Nelson Quiñones. The treasurer, the Rev. Dr. L. George Detweiler, has served congregation in this synod as an interim pastor; the president is the Rev. Dr. J. Francis Watson of the New Jersey Synod. The Archives Center has a working staff that includes Executive Director Lisa Minardi and Archivist Sheila Joy as well as a variety of part-time workers and volunteers who, among other tasks, answer inquiries and sort and file documents brought to the archives for safekeeping.

Coming with this report is a recent copy of the Lutheran Archives Center's periodical, *Archives Advocate*. This issue includes Pastor Quiñones' article "St. Martin de Porres Lutheran Church: A Journey of Service," which tells about one of this synod's former congregations. To subscribe to this newsletter, please email director@lutheranarchives.org with your name and address.

One current project of the Archives Center is to provide for the copying of congregational records. Ancestry.com is carrying out this digitization process. By making an electronic copy of church records, we have assurance that priceless information will not be totally lost if a congregation's records are misplaced, discarded, or burn. To learn more about this process and to make arrangements to have your congregation's records copied, please contact Sheila Joy at archivist@lutheranarchives.org.

One recent misfortune at the Archives Center has been water damage from broken pipes in the seminary building that houses the archives. The current situation is that the Archives Center is located in the basement of the Brossman Center, a good place in terms of protecting items from sunlight but a bad place when there is plumbing overhead. The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Archives Center is, therefore, looking into the feasibility of having a dedicated, above-ground facility.

Our synod's role in the Archives Center is significant, and our holdings are significant, including our share—along with that of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod—of the H. M. Muhlenberg and Ministerium of Pennsylvania collections. Thank you for reading this report and for your interest in the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia.

Carl D. Shankweiler, Synod Archivist



ARCHIVES *Advocate*

Northeast Regional Archives • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Vol. 7 No. 1, Summer/Fall 2022

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

After a long hiatus due to COVID-19, the Lutheran Archives Center has recently reopened for in-person research. We are excited to welcome researchers back to our facility and look forward to helping them access our resources. Advance appointments are required and may be scheduled Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. We also continue to offer long-distance research services for a fee. More information about both options has been added to our website.

Changes in staffing are underway. Melissa Bergoffen, our project archivist working with the Ministerium of Pennsylvania collection and funded by a Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission grant, will conclude her work at LACAP this fall and begin an archaeology graduate program in Greece. Laurie Mueller, our processing archivist helping with the backlog of records from closed congregations, has moved on to a new position as the office administrator at Good Shepherd Lutheran in King of Prussia, PA. Joining us this fall as the new processing archivist is Juliana Rhinehart, who worked in the Dickinson College archives and recently moved to Mt. Airy, where her partner is attending United Lutheran Seminary. Linda Beck, our steadfast archives volunteer, continues to help with processing and is currently organizing the records of St. John's English Lutheran Church of Philadelphia, founded in 1806.

In June, we launched the online version of our Past Perfect database so that anyone with computer access can browse our collections. Nearly 2,000 records are currently available, and more are being added every week. Highlights include the contents of the Augustana Museum, nearly 1,000 books from our research library, and the records of recently closed congregations which have been fully processed. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania collection is also being added in phases. In many cases, electronic finding aids with detailed lists of the contents are available in the database. This is a huge step forward for the archives to be able to share so much information about our holdings online.

In a continuation of that theme, we are thrilled to announce that the Lutheran Archives Center is partnering with Ancestry.com to digitize our parish records. Consisting of birth/baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death records from hundreds of congregations, much of this material is unique and exists only in manuscript form. Ancestry will scan all of the records and prepare searchable indexes—including for the records in old German script. These images and the written records will then be made fully searchable online via Ancestry.com to their subscribers as well as to members of the Lutheran Archives Center. Onsite researchers will also be able to access the Ancestry database from our research library. We are most grateful to Ancestry.com for taking on this massive project and excited that all of this historic material will be digitally preserved and made accessible online.

To help us with these efforts to preserve and share the history of the Lutheran Church in America, we ask for your support. Your financial contributions help us to hire processing staff and purchase archival supplies—both essential for the preservation of our Lutheran heritage. Please consider making a generous donation to support the Lutheran Archives Center, either online at laphila.org/donate or via check in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

Lisa Minardi
Lisa Minardi
Executive Director



The Lutheran Archives Center staff gathered in front of a new wall banner that welcomes visitors to the archives. From left to right: Melissa Bergoffen, project archivist; Sheila Joy, archivist; Lisa Minardi, director; and Laurie Mueller, processing archivist

Thank you for your support!

Ministerium of Pennsylvania Collection Project

by Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist



Highlights of items found within the former Ministerium of Pennsylvania Collection, including a constitution from 1792, minutes from 1971 and 1850, printed minutes in both English and German, a financial ledger, and the Ministerium's seal from 1830.



The former Ministerium of Pennsylvania's seal, which depicts a vineyard and a hand bearing a sword.

Much has changed since I began as LACAP's Project Archivist working with the Ministerium of Pennsylvania (MoP) Collection just over one year ago. The most obvious change is that we have officially renamed this collection *Lutheranism in America, 1748–1988: Ministerium of Pennsylvania through Lutheran Church in America*. After inventorying the collection and becoming familiar with its vast scope, I found the original MoP title to be somewhat inaccurate; the MoP collection still forms the bulk of the collection, but it is only a part of the whole. There have been other behind-the-scenes changes. When I first started,

I mainly worked onsite to inventory and assess the collection. In recent months, I have been working remotely—using the inventory spreadsheet I created—in order to digitally arrange the collection.

And this brings me to probably the most exciting change: the *Lutheranism in America Collection* is now available to the public! Thanks to the recent launch of our new PastPerfect collections database, you can now find records on the Ministerium of Pennsylvania (1748–1853), Philadelphia Lutheran congregations, and the Muhlenberg family. In the coming months, the entire *Lutheranism in America Collection* will

Collections Database Goes Online

by Sheila Joy



Before processing, this section of the collection was a jumble of books, loose manuscripts, and boxes of documents. After processing, the series is neater, has been consolidated to save space, and is now searchable via our PastPerfect database.

become available online. Images of objects found within the collection, such as those illustrated nearby, are also being included online.

Although my time with this collection is coming to an end, I will continue to add more items to the website, as well as make finding aids for the collection. I'm so proud of how far this collection has come, and I can't wait for all of you to navigate the collection and find information about our collection and Lutheranism in America that you didn't know before!



www.lacphila.org
Screenshot of our new online collections database hosted by PastPerfect Online. To start browsing our collections, visit <https://lacphila.pastperfectonline.com>

The Archives team is very excited to announce that we have officially launched our searchable online collections database! You may now browse our collections anytime, for free, at the following link (also on our homepage): <https://lacphila.pastperfectonline.com>. To view records that are currently available online, select the "random images" tab or browse through the archives, photos, libraries, and/or objects tabs to see what is in each of these categories. If you are looking for something more specific, you can click on the "keyword search" or "advanced search" tabs and type in what you are looking for. For example, a search for "Augustana Institute" generates 205 results. Many collections also contain an image along with their record which allows researchers to preview the material without coming to the archives in person. Thus far, all our reference library books are available online, along with a variety of recently processed church collections, photographs, and objects. We will be actively adding collections to the database as we process them, so new items will be added every month.

This launch has been a longtime coming and has been a major goal since I started my position in April 2020, back when our PastPerfect software was still in its packaging. In the two years since we have made great progress, from gaining intellectual control of our collections through the creation of inventory lists and finding aids, to the ongoing processing of new and backlogged collections, to learning the ins and outs of PastPerfect to get everything online that you see today. We would not have gotten this far without the help of our staff including former processing assistants Courtney Smith and Danielle McCleary; former processing archivist, Laurie Mueller; project archivist, Melissa Bergoffen; and our volunteer extraordinaire, Linda Beck.



The First Black ELCA Congregation in Pennsylvania: Rev. Allen G. Youngblood and Annunciation Lutheran Church

by Sheila Joy, Associate Archivist

One of the most rewarding parts of my job as an archivist is assisting people with their research. I recently received a phone call from Robert (Bob) Youngblood who was looking for photographs relating to his father, the Rev. Allen G. Youngblood, to piece together his early history as a young Black pastor in Philadelphia. At the time, I did not realize how much I would discover about Rev. Youngblood's legacy and contributions to Philadelphia. He was responsible for developing, constructing, and leading the first Black ELCA congregation in not only Philadelphia but the entire state of Pennsylvania.

Rev. Allen G. Youngblood was born on November 19, 1902, in Barnesville, Georgia. After graduating from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1945, he was ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. Shortly thereafter he received a call from the Board of American Missions (BAM) to serve as board missionary. Established in 1942, BAM was originally created as a World War II emergency relief mission. After the war it focused on providing Lutheran ministry in rural and urban areas. BAM provided services and funds to build and establish new congregations. It also studied racial and cultural change and its effects on church congregations. In 1944, while Youngblood was studying at LTSP, the Ministerium hired the Rev. Jesse Route of New York City to survey Black communities in various Philadelphia neighborhoods. The following year,



Rev. Youngblood with his LTSP graduating class, 1945.

BAM developed a new project to create a Black Lutheran church in the city of Philadelphia. Youngblood was called to assist with this goal.

The new Black congregation, known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Annunciation, was organized on November 15, 1945, with 53 charter numbers. Services were initially held in Rev. Youngblood's home at 886 North 40th Street. A year later, the closure of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church at 40th Street and Powelton Avenue in West

Philadelphia, provided a new home for the congregation. Annunciation's first service in their new building was held on January 5, 1947. Rev. Youngblood served until 1952 when he accepted a call to Ascension Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio. Annunciation served the community for another six years before merging with Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Roxborough (active 1905-98). While in Philadelphia, Rev. Youngblood also worked with the Haverford Center for Youth and Christ Lutheran Church on Diamond Street in

Philadelphia (est. 1949), led by Rev. Edward Dixon of the American Lutheran Church.

During his time in Ohio, Rev. Youngblood started two other congregations: Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church in Toledo (1952–60) and Advent Lutheran Church in Cleveland (1960–71). In 1972, he was called to serve Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, but only served there a short period before he passed away in Cleveland on March 23, 1973. Rev. Youngblood was survived by three sons and his wife, Thelma, who served in pastoral roles as well. On September 17, 2006, she was ordained as pastor of Kingshill Lutheran Church on St. Croix and became the first female ordained pastor in the Lutheran Church of the Virgin Islands.

Rev. Youngblood's legacy includes mentoring other young Black pastors such as the Rev. Dr. James E. Gunther (1932–2015), who briefly served at Nativity Lutheran Church and Tabernacle Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, and later Transfiguration Lutheran Church in Harlem, New York. In 2018, Rev. Gunther donated a collection of records to the Lutheran Archives Center documenting his work at Transfiguration. Rev. Youngblood also mentored the Rev. Dr. Richard Stewart, a retired pastor and former LTSP professor. Dr. Stewart has done extensive research on Black Lutheran history. Today he is leading an ongoing oral history project to record, preserve, and share the history of Black Lutherans. Because the written history of early Black Lutheran figures is so scarce, it is incredibly important to gather oral histories of those who are still living with us today to preserve their legacies and tell their stories. The Lutheran Archives Center is proud to share in this work.

Sources

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Advent Bulletin, The Rev. Dr. Richard N. Stewart Collection, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia

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H 10
P5461

"Hitherto Hath the Lord Helped Us"
I Sam. 7:12.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 1947
WE ENTER



The New Church Home
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Annunciation
Fortieth Street and Powelton Avenue
(Powelton Ave. is 1 block North of Market St.) West Philadelphia, 4, Pa.
Rev. Allen G. Youngblood - - - Pastor

Program from Annunciation's first service in its new building at 40th Street and Powelton Avenue on January 5, 1947.

Augustana News

by Kim-Eric Williams, Curator



Photograph of the New England Conference Convention, 1920. Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia, Augustana Institute Collection, 2022.0019.001. Gift of Pastor John Keogh

A fascinating panoramic photograph of the New England Conference of Swedish Lutheran Churches' Eighth Annual Convention, held on May 2, 1920, was recently donated to the Augustana Institute. It shows all the pastors and spouses who had participated in the "Great Missionary Generation" in New England, when in 40 years more than 80 congregations were organized. The conference—the first synod in New England—was only eight years old and still growing. The 1920 convention took place at Salem Lutheran Church (now Faith) in Quincy, Massachusetts. This congregation had built a sanctuary of granite from the hill on which the building stood; the photo shows the delegates gathered beside the church in what is now their rock garden. No hotels were needed. Delegates stayed with friends or

members of the congregation and all sessions were held in the sanctuary. The photograph, measuring 28 by 9 inches, was donated by Immanuel Lutheran Church in Attleboro, Massachusetts. To preserve this fragile original photograph, a copy was made and framed for display in the Augustana Museum.

The Augustana Institute continues to collect Augustana memorabilia from the northeast territories of the old New York and New England Conferences for its museum, located in the Brossmann Center on the Philadelphia campus of the United Lutheran Seminary. After the Swedish Colonial Society's collection is moved to be closer to their activities in Tinicum Township, we will then have empty space for new additions to the Augustana Museum. We are especially

searching now for works by Olof Grafström and Birger Sandzén as well as a model of the Bertel Thorvaldsen statue of Christ, "Come unto me."

Our friend, Jacob Schaad Jr., at age 100, has finally published his book *Swedes and Deeds: The Ups and Downs of Upsala College*. He was news editor at Upsala during the 1960s and comes with both a newspaperman's storytelling ability and an insider's knowledge. His sense of humor shines throughout the 150 pages of text and historic photos. The book was published by Christian Faith Publishing and may be ordered online in paperback, hardcover, or digital versions.

St. Martin de Porres Lutheran Church: A Journey of Service

by Pastor Nelson Quiñones

The statue of San Martin de Porres is a relic of the Hispanic Lutheran church that bore his name from 1988–2018 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The statue was donated to the congregation by the Luis Salazar family at the church's beginning. It is now in the collection of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia.

Born Martin de Porres Velázquez on December 9, 1579, in Lima, Peru, de Porres was a lay brother in the Dominican Order. He was beatified in 1837 and later canonized by Pope John XXIII in 1962. He was noted for seeking interracial harmony and particularly remembered for his work on behalf of the poor, having established a children's hospital and an orphanage. San Martin de Porres is the first Black Saint in the Americas. During his lifetime, de Porres was relegated to work with a broom in his hands and experienced the struggles faced by Blacks of mixed ethnicity. His service to God was what the people of St. Martin identified with in Allentown.

On December 11, 1988, St. Martin de Porres Lutheran Church was organized as a congregation in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Then Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom of the ELCA wrote a letter to the members of St. Martin in which he stated, "Your congregation's service of organization last December was historic: you are the first new congregation organized in your synod since the ELCA was formed. And, as a Hispanic congregation, you are a living expression of our deep hope that the ELCA will become a truly inclusive church."

For 30 years, St. Martin served the Latino population and Allentown community-at-large with projects such as *Fiestas del Corazón* (Fiestas from the Heart), a



Statue of San Martin de Porres from the St. Martin de Porres Lutheran Church, Allentown, Pa. Collection of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia, 2022.0011.002. Photo by Sheila Joy

faith-based enterprise that provided economic development by catering Latin food; and the *Academia de Fe y Liderazgo* (Academy of Faith and Leadership), which developed faith leaders by teaching church history,

theology, music, and various worship settings for its multicultural ethnicities. Described by one writer as a "little United Nations," St. Martin's membership included people from Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic as well as those of German heritage. Its *Luceros de la Fe* (Bright Stars of the Faith) ministry helped children with special needs.

St. Martin served as a sanctuary congregation to assist persecuted refugees; a social worker aided families, children, and youth. St. Martin also provided bilingual assistance to non-English speakers with interpreting and translating services. The Hispanic Political Caucus with the incentive to "Get Out The Vote" was initiated at St. Martin. Helping St. Martin in these endeavors both financially and through partnerships were the Allentown Area Lutheran Parishes (AALP), the Lutheran Church in America, the ELCA, and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

AALP led the initial endeavor to sustain the new Hispanic Lutheran Mission. Once St. Martin was organized, pastoral support was provided by partnering with St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Allentown. The St. Martin's congregation eventually dwindled and ultimately held its last Spanish-speaking worship service on November 4, 2018 (All Saints Sunday)—concluding 30 years of ministry in the Allentown communities of Little Lehigh, Cumberland Gardens, Hanover Acres, and Riverview Terrace. St. Martin never owned a church building. The statue of San Martin de Porres identifies a people who swept with faith, witness, and service in God's ministry.

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Newsletter of the
Lutheran Archives Center
at Philadelphia

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Lutheran Archives Center
AT PHILADELPHIA

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

In the mid-1800s, English author Anthony Trollope wrote a six-volume series entitled *The Chronicles of Barchester*, detailing the fictional cathedral town of Barchester. He offers a thoughtful, entertaining, and often comedic take on the 19th century English clerical world. In one of the novels, an Oxford professor is brought in by the local clergy to reign in the aspirations of the bishop's abrasive chaplain. At one point in the drama, the bishop asks the professor how things are going in Oxford and gets the wry reply, "We dream our dreams." In Trollope's novel, things do not go well for the chaplain, who ends up leaving the cathedral in disgrace, while the professor's protégé is made the cathedral dean of Barchester. The professor's dreams are realized, albeit in a different direction than first anticipated.

"We dream our dreams." At the Archives Center we too have dreamed our dreams. Over the past decades, our wildest dreams have included getting a searchable list of our collections onto the internet and perhaps sharing a few photographs of choice artifacts online. Our accomplishments have now far surpassed our wildest dreams. As our Executive Director's letter reports, we not only have a searchable list of our collection online via our Archives website, but we are also in the process of digitizing much of our collection with Ancestry.com, which will make our archives available the world over for researchers and genealogists. Some of our biggest dreams are becoming a reality in ways that we could not have even imagined decades ago. We invite you to check it all out by visiting our website and touring the archives sometime in-person. Please join us as we move in these new, exciting directions—and please continue your prayerful support of this important regional ministry!

Sincerely,

J. Francis Watson
President of the Board

UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Unifying, Learning, Serving

United Lutheran Seminary continues to build and sustain an affirming and diverse learning community of faithful, well-educated leaders skilled at guiding grace-filled encounters. Deeply rooted in the history of Lutheranism within Christianity, we witness to and participate in the work of God in the world through spiritual leadership and accompaniment, public advocacy, impactful worship, and care of neighbor.

In three years, we will be observing the bicentennial of our origins when Samuel Simon Schmucker founded the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg in part because its bucolic setting would ensure a place of study and contemplation free from the distractions of the world. Of course, our national narrative put an abrupt end to that concept in 1863, and shortly thereafter C.P. Krauth felt that the center of Lutheran theological learning would be better off in the growing city of Philadelphia. After 154 years and several failed attempts, the two campuses were re-united under the banner of United. This word is a lofty aspirational sentiment, given the fractious world in which we find ourselves.

The church of Christ is struggling to be seen against a backdrop of political drama and escalating tensions over our history, our climate, and our future. Nevertheless, it is a good time to be the church. It is a good time to be United under the banner of God's intended formation for all of us. The seminary has adapted quickly to the world emerging from Covid, providing new technologies and learning platforms that make theological education accessible to people as far away as Palestine, Ghana, and Myanmar. No longer bound by archaic notions of geographical limitations, our two campuses have broken down old barriers and assumptions, creating a new campus that is both geographical and without boundaries, offering our students to gather in person and virtually. Our faculty is working to provide learning opportunities in Guatemala, Germany, Palestine, and India.

In the past year we have dedicated a great deal of time and resources to developing a Strategic Plan for the seminary which gives us a wide-angle view of future aspirations to fulfill the needs of a changing church and world. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund and support from your synod, we will continue to offer degree programs at little or no cost to the student, allowing a higher ed. degree without crippling educational loan debt. In addition, our endowment allows us to apply funding to a new and exciting horizon of learning opportunities for rostered and lay folks.

The Strategic Plan recognizes that learning and formation never end. Our faith narrative is never fully formed. Sanctification is a life-long process full of fits and starts, mountaintops and valleys. This is the reason United Lutheran Seminary will continue to focus on building a lifelong community of learning through Kindling Faith, the Center for Sabbath Rest and Formation. Already in its first year of existence, Kindling Faith has created over sixty opportunities for learning across a wide range of topics, demographics, and learning platforms. While much of the programming takes place in a virtual setting, multi-day events take place on both United campuses, offering alums and lay folk the opportunity to spend time in a place apart where they can engage in learning and fellowship with like-minded colleagues and

friends. Kindling Faith has a learning opportunity for you—simply go to uls.edu and click on “Learn” to see what we are offering.

Thank you for walking with us on this portion of our common journey. In the year ahead, I hope to see and meet more of you on the territory of your synod, on zoom, or on one of our beautiful historic campuses. Peace be with you.

Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin,
Seminary President

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

March 2022-March 2023

- As part of continued efforts to support students' mental and emotional well-being, Muhlenberg has continued its 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. As part of our work this year, all of our community members now have access to innovative online training to help them recognize colleagues or students who may be struggling with mental health concerns or contemplating self-harm or suicide. The modules train people on how to have conversations in those difficult moments, how to link them to appropriate support resources, etc.

- We had a successful return to an in-person Baccalaureate service led by Chaplain Janelle Neubauer, followed by an in-person commencement ceremony held at the PPL Center in Allentown.

- Campus activity returned to pre-Covid normality. This included, but was not limited to, religious services, sports games, theater and music performances, and in-person family, alumni, and Class weekends being held without capacity restrictions. We also returned to hosting our Candlelight Carols Advent Services at Egner Memorial Chapel at full capacity and continued offering livestream viewing as well as a produced version for later viewing.

- The new Fahy Commons for Public Engagement and Innovations opened on campus and is now home to Religious and Spiritual Life, Community Engagement, Graduate and Continuing Education, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship program, and the Muhlenberg Institute for Public Opinion. There are also a variety of new studios and other creative spaces for students to take advantage of. The Fahy Commons has been named one of the most sustainable buildings in the world and offers a wonderful community-oriented space for students and visitors at the College.

- Muhlenberg's statement on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) (on our website: www.Muhlenberg.edu) has been updated following a community effort that engaged students, faculty, staff, trustees and alumni. The Board of Trustees approved the new DEIB statement in January 2023.

- The college launched the Campus Living Room Project to foster conversation around critical societal issues. These scheduled discussions were led by faculty, staff and student groups in an effort to bring together community members across identity, experience, area of expertise and ideology to seek to better understand the perspectives of others and to collectively grow in our quest for deeper learning and more complex ways of thinking across differences.

- Five members of the faculty were recently awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of President Kathleen Harring and Provost Laura Lowe Furge. You can find more information about each promoted faculty on our website: www.Muhlenberg.edu.

- In April 2023, Muhlenberg College celebrates 175 years of preparing generations of students for lives of meaning and impact through a rigorous education grounded in the liberal arts. The College will mark this historic occasion with three days of events, many of which are open to the larger Muhlenberg community. The weekend's events include a keynote address, faculty panel, dedication of the new academic building Fahy Commons, a gala and campus-wide celebration plus much more.

- The Boundless Campaign, launched during the inauguration weekend of President Kathleen Haring, continues to secure funding for a comprehensive, carefully interconnected group of strategic priorities that will shape students' academic and residential experience for decades to come. \$88 million of the \$111 million campaign goal has been raised. The campaign is scheduled to run through 2025.

- At this point in time, we are working towards Honors Convocation as well as commencement weekend programming including a student focused Baccalaureate service, a family day on campus, and commencement ceremony at the PPL Center in Allentown.

GOOD SHEPHERD REHABILITATION NETWORK

March 2022 to February 2023

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 ground-breaker.

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 2022-23 accomplishments included:

Good Shepherd continued construction of its state-of-the-art, 76-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital in Center Valley, Pennsylvania. When it opens in late-July 2023, it 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. 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.

Good Shepherd launched a partnership in July 2022 with the Temple University Hospital Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Residency Program. Good Shepherd's collaboration with Temple matches nine highly qualified candidates in the field of physiatry for a three-year categorical training program at Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital. Through the Temple University Hospital/Good Shepherd partnership, residents have a majority focus on inpatient rehabilitation experience at Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital, including brain injury medicine, stroke rehabilitation, medical rehabilitation and spinal cord injury medicine. The residents also will have the opportunity to experience ambulatory services relevant to chronic disease populations.

Good Shepherd Rehabilitation and GSPP employees were awarded Good Shepherd Innovation Grants, which facilitate innovation and collaboration by providing significant financial support and development opportunities for employee-led projects that improve patient care and define the future of rehabilitation — from developing a prototype, implementing a trial or launching a research study.

In addition to being the only health-care provider in the country to provide all three sizes of the Trexo robotic gait training device across inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation settings, Good Shepherd became the first provider in the world to reach 1 million steps taken in the devices.

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 sixth straight year of deficiency-free surveys.

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.

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.

Gods Work Our Hands 2023 at the Northeastern Penn Synod Office. Lutheran Disaster Response – Eastern PA is inviting anyone who would like to participate to join us on Sept. 10, 2023. We'll be assembling and collecting flood buckets and hygiene kits. Professionals will provide demonstrations on the basics of rebuilding after disasters for things like how to spackle, how to paint, and how to use power tools! Please visit our website or contact Heidi Shilanskas of St. Mark's Lutheran, for more information, at hshilanskas@gmail.com. This might be a great time to put those Thrivent Action Team funds to good use!

Hurricane Ida. Long term recovery from Hurricane Ida in September 2021, continues. 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. LDR – Eastern PA is leading the Pennsylvania VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) Unmet Needs Roundtable and through that process we have assisted 26 survivors in meeting recovery needs related to rental assistance, heating and electrical replacement, storage costs and more. We are also leading the PAVOAD Disaster Case Management Committee for Ida recovery. Our case managers provide survivors with steady guidance in navigating exceptionally complex recovery applications. Want to help? Reach out to Julia about volunteering or donating!

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. This work should conclude in summer 2023! However, our commit-

ment to the community continues as community leaders continue the work of resiliency building and mitigation.

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training (LEVT)

Pastor Brandon Heavner from Weisenberg Lutheran Church has completed his first year as one of our trainers for this program. Trainings in 2023 include April 29 at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Reading, June 3 at St. Michael's Lutheran in Sellersville, October 7 at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Wilkes-Barre, and October 21 at Advent Lutheran in West Chester. Please visit our website to register.

Helping Members Refill Their Cup with Responsive Benefits

In 2022, Portico invited plan members to use their full range of benefits to care for themselves following the challenges and stress of the last few pandemic years. We continually seek cost-effective and nimble ways to support ELCA leaders, congregations, and organizations with high-quality, innovative, and stable benefits that promote holistic well-being.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits provided both in-person and virtual access to health care and wellness resources.
- Portico’s Financial Planners and LSS of Minnesota helped ELCA Retirement Plan members navigate the weight of rising interest rates and market downturns through no- or low-cost financial planning, coaching services, and financial education.

In recent years, we’ve added several eligible ELCA- and full-communion-partner organizations to the Portico community. Growing the number of members we serve helps us manage costs and offer innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups, affirming the importance of church together.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Meeting the Need in 2022

232

Podcast Plays

Of the “Creative Approaches to Innovative Ministry” episode of Being Here last year.

16,002

Total Pounds Lost

Through the Omada prevention program since it launched in 2018, with 2,643 pounds lost in 2022.

591

Retired

With Portico’s bundled benefits program — Congratulations to these faithful servants!

1,132

Webinar Views

Of the annual Retirement Readiness Series (live and on-demand).

3,080

Medical Visits via Text Based Care

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

9.75%

Increase in Net Membership

Over the past 5 years.

3,952

Health & Fitness Classes Completed

On Portico’s online Burnalong platform.

Over \$2M

Debt Paid Off

By plan members working with LSS of Minnesota financial counseling since the partnership began.

86%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care Center, certified for excellence since 2015.

Bethlehem Easton Mission District Treasurer's Acknowledgement 2022

Location, Congregation	World	Homes &	Other	2022	2022	2023
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2022	2022	2022			
BETHLEHEM, HOLY CROSS-2002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
BETHLEHEM, ROSEMONT-2005	392.00	0.00	190.00	0.00	800.00	800.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. JOHN WINDISH-2007	500.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. MARK-2008	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. PAUL-2010	438.00	0.00	300.00	1,800.00	1,525.00	2,400.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. PETER-2011	1,182.10	0.00	75.00	9,257.50	8,497.80	7,520.00
BETHLEHEM, ST. STEPHEN-2012	1,186.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
EASTON, ARNDTS (FORKS TWP)-2015	0.00	0.00	163.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
EASTON, GOOD SHEPHERD-2017	0.00	1,281.03	0.00	0.00	4,184.39	0.00
EASTON, ST. ANDREW-2018	0.00	1,500.00	0.00	22,500.00	22,500.00	24,102.00
EASTON, ST. JOHN-2019	0.00	150.00	2,042.00	14,700.00	14,700.00	15,000.00
EASTON, ST. PAUL-2020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
EASTON, ST. PAUL THIRD-2021	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	999.00	0.00
HELLERTOWN, CHRIST-2025	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,500.00	17,500.00	0.00
MARTINS CREEK, GOOD SHEPHERD-2027	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	405.00	0.00
WILLIAMSTOWNSHIP, 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	2,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00	4,000.00
TATAMY, HOPE-2031	2,901.50	1,600.00	0.00	0.00	5,289.36	0.00
WILLIAMSTOWNSHIP, ST. LUKE.-2032	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BETHLEHEM, LIGHT OF CHRIST-2033	3,033.00	0.00	332.00	15,500.00	15,500.00	16,000.00
BETHLEHEM, STAR OF BETHLEHEM-2034	0.00	2,000.00	235.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
BETHLEHEM-EASTON DIST. MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	10,632.60	6,531.03	5,337.00	115,757.50	118,400.55	92,322.00

Total churches responding

14

12

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

EAST BERKS ,MISSION DISTRICT TREASURERS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2022

Location, Congregation	World	Homes &	Other	2022	2022	2023
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Com mit	Response	Commit
	2022	2022	2022			
BECHTELSVILLE, TRINITY-3001	4,023.00	0.00	1,155.00	6,000.00	10,046.00	6,000.00
BLANDON, MAIDENCREEK-3002	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,500.00	5,500.00	0.00
BOWERS, HOPE-3003	0.00	0.00	232.75	600.00	1,000.00	700.00
BOYERTOWN, ST. JOHN-3004	3,257.00	935.00	292.00	0.00	30,000.00	0.00
MOHRSVILLE, (SALEM) BELLEMAN'S-3005	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	1,478.50	2,000.00
DOUGLASSVILLE, ST. PAUL-3007	2,770.00	0.00	4,717.00	46,200.00	46,200.00	46,200.00
DRYVILLE, CHRIST-3008	246.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19,375.00	0.00
FLEETWOOD, ST. PAUL-3009	1,254.40	0.00	310.00	0.00	14,789.65	12,000.00
HAMBURG, ST. JOHN -3010	841.24	0.00	0.00	15,500.00	17,610.00	0.00
HAMBURG, ST. MICHAEL-3011	1,182.10	0.00	75.00	0.00	8,497.80	0.00
HAMBURG, ST. PAUL-3012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	700.00	1,200.00
BOYERTOWN, ST. JOSEPH (HILL) - 3013	995.00	71.00	0.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	10,000.00
ALBURTIS, HUFFS, - 3014	30.00	0.00	1,346.75	0.00	10,015.00	12,775.00
FLEETWOOD, NEW JERUSALEM-3015	25.00	0.00	25.00	2,000.00	2,527.00	0.00
KEMPTON, NEW BETHEL-3017	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	750.00	0.00
STONY RUN, FRIEDENS-3018	2,800.00	0.00	2,600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
KRUMSVILLE, MT. ZION-3019	83.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,000.00
KUTZTOWN, ST. JOHN-3020	193.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,496.00	0.00
KUTZTOWN, TRINITY-3021	1,859.60	0.00	1,860.58	0.00	23,244.00	0.00
OLEY, ST. PAUL (LOBACHSVILLE)-3023	0.00	0.00	885.00	1,200.00	515.00	1,200.00
FLEETWOOD, SALEM.(SHALTERS)-3024	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,100.00	3,480.00	3,600.00
MAXATAWNY, ZION-3025	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,709.00	10,000.00
MERTZTOWN, ST. PAUL-3026	0.00	0.00	0.00	600.00	300.00	2,600.00
KUTZTOWN, ZION MOSELEM-3027	0.00	0.00	237.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
FLEETWOOD, ST. PETER (BECKERS)-3028	0.00	200.00	200.00	2,200.00	2,200.00	2,000.00
OLEY, FRIEDENS-3029	1,996.00	80.00	2,033.00	0.00	18,677.00	19,000.00
PERRY TOWNSHIP, ZION -3030	3,696.00	250.00	0.00	11,000.00	11,000.00	11,000.00
SHOEMAKERSVILLE, ST. LUKE-3031	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	716.50	0.00
LEESPORT, ST. JOHN. (GERNANTS)-3032	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
OLEY, CHRIST (SPANGSVILLE)-3033	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
READING, ZION SPIES-3034	669.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00	0.00
TOPTON, TRINITY-3035	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00	0.00
TOPTON HOME, GRACE-3036	825.00	950.00	975.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
LEESPORT, HOLY TRINITY-3037	166.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	0.00
SHARTLESVILLE, FRIEDENS-3038	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00	7,772.75	0.00
EAST BERKS DISTRICT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	26,911.84	2,486.00	19,144.08	139,500.00	300,899.20	154,075.00

Total churches responding

20

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

Hazleton-Lehighon Mission District Treasurer's Acknowledgement 2022

Location, Congregation	World Hunger 2022	Homes & Agencies 2022	Other ELCA 2022	2022 Commit	2022 Response	2023 Commit
ASHFIELD, DINKEY MEMORIAL-4001	2,043.00	0.00	201.00	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
AU DENRIED, SALEM-4003	80.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,019.00	1,000.00
BEAVER MEADOWS, ST. PAUL-4004	160.00	0.00	0.00	3,100.00	3,035.00	0.00
BOWMANSTOWN, TRINITY-4005	51.00	0.00	67.00	1,400.00	1,744.00	0.00
PENN FOREST. TWP, CHRIST-4006	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	4,375.00	0.00
CONYNGHAM, CHRIST-4007	8,547.00	0.00	0.00	52,000.00	54,648.00	52,000.00
MAHONING, ST. JOHN-4008	0.00	39.00	0.00	0.00	16,187.00	10,000.00
FREELAND, ST. LUKE-4009						
HAZLETON, CHRIST-4011	1,560.00	0.00	1000.00	20,500.00	20,376.00	20,500.00
HAZLETON, TRINITY-4012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,477.00	0.00
JIM THORPE EAST, ST. JOHN-4013	314.50	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	4,735.00	0.00
JIM THORPE HGHTS, ST. JOHN-4014	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,608.00	7,808.00	7,608.00
LANSFORD, TRINITY-4015	150.00	10000.00	20000.00	5,000.00	6,165.00	5,000.00
LEHIGHTON, TRINITY-4016	4,772.00	1,500.00	17.00	10,000.00	11,486.70	10,000.00
PACKERTON, ZION-4018	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,200.00	3,200.00	3,200.00
MAHANDY CITY, CHRIST-4019	421.00	139.00	220.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
NEW RINGGOLD, FRIEDENS-4022	654.00	0.00	225.00	0.00	935.00	1,000.00
N WEISSPORT, ST. MATTHEW-4023	941.50	885.50	0.00	0.00	4,157.00	0.00
NUREMBERG, EMMANUEL-4024	0.00	0.00	250.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
ZION GROVE, MT ZION-4025	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,800.00	4,800.00
PALMERTON, HOLY TRINITY-4026	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,400.00	2,400.00	0.00
BARNESVILLE, CHRIST-4028	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	4,917.00	0.00
RINGTOWN, ST. JOHN-4029	1,541.78	200.00	535.00	9,000.00	9,100.00	9,000.00
BRANDONVILLE, ST. JOHN-4030	0.00	100.00	20.00	5,800.00	4,350.00	5,800.00
SAINT JOHNS, ST. JOHN-4031	2,400.00	0.00	45.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00
SUMMIT HILL, ST. PAUL-4033	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,200.00	0.00
TAMAQUA, ST. JOHN-4035	10.00	0.00	770.00	5,000.00	7,428.00	5,000.00
TAMAQUA, ZION-4036	1,995.00	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	6,289.00	6,000.00
TOWAMENSING, ST. JOHN-4037	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
TRACHSVILLE, JERUSALEM-4038	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	2,250.00	3,000.00
WEATHERLY, ST. MATTHEW-4039	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	50.00
WEATHERLY, ZION-4040	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00
WEST HAZLETON, TRINITY-4042	194.83	0.00	20.19	0.00	4,875.00	4,500.00
MANTZVILLE, ST. PETER-4043	0.00	0.00	251.00	7,500.00	7,515.25	0.00
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	27,335.61	13,363.50	25,121.19	169,308.00	234,871.95	162,258.00

Total churches responding

21

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

Lehigh Mission District Treasurer's Acknowledgement 2022

Location, Congregation	World	Homes &	Other	2022	2022	2023
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2022	2022	2022			
ALBURTIS, ZION LEHIGH-1001	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	5,922.00	0.00
ALLENTOWN, CHRIST-1002	1,115.00	0.00	7,242.00	41,000.00	41,004.00	41,000.00
ALLENTOWN, REDEEMER-1005	910.00	1,050.00	2,485.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. JOHN-1007	0.00	0.00	200.00	28,020.00	28,020.00	28,020.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. LUKE-1009	5.00	500.00	0.00	250.00	1,114.50	0.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. MARK-1010	228.00	400.00	415.00	1,890.00	1,986.50	1,890.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. PETER/HANOVER-1014	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	2,400.00	2,400.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. TIMOTHY-1017	3,040.00	0.00	3,090.00	7,500.00	7,500.00	8,000.00
ALLENTOWN, TRINITY MEMORIAL-1018	0.00	0.00	259.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
CETRONIA, CEDAR-1019	870.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,145.76	12,000.00
COOPERSBURG, ST. JAMES-1020	185.00	1,044.00	3,104.00	23,000.00	23,004.00	23,000.00
COOPERSBURG, ST. PAUL-1021	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EMMAUS, HOLY SPIRIT-1022	0.00	0.00	7,400.00	33,000.00	33,000.00	33,000.00
EMMAUS, ST. JOHN-1023	1,561.00	0.00	1,002.00	12,000.00	17,008.27	15,000.00
FOGELSVILLE, ST. JOHN-1024	340.00	2,049.54	235.00	5,850.00	6,415.92	5,119.00
FRIEDENSVILLE, FRIEDENS-1025	420.00	0.00	485.00	1,760.00	1,760.00	1,760.00
MACUNGIE, GRACE-1027	245.00	1,250.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	1,000.00
OLD ZIONSVILLE, ZION-1028	25.00	0.00	0.00	17,200.00	17,201.99	13,000.00
EAST SALISBURY, JERUSALEM-1030	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
SUMMIT LAWN, ST. ANDREW-1031	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
BREINIGSVILLE, ST. PAUL-1032	0.00	2,040.00	200.00	20,100.00	20,100.00	20,100.00
MACUNGIE R. D., ST. PETER-1033	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
WEST SALISBURY, JERUSALEM-1034	1,000.00	900.00	1,400.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
ALLENTOWN, ST. MICHAEL/NATIVITY-1037	5,430.00	0.00	1,550.00	37,905.00	46,078.41	37,905.00
LEHIGH DISTRICT, MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	15,374.00	9,233.54	29,217.00	250,475.00	287,659.35	244,694.00

Total churches responding

16

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

Northern Lehigh Mission District Treasurer's Acknowledgement 2022

Location, Congregation	World Hunger 2022	Homes & Agencies 2022	Other ELCA 2022	2022 Commit	2022 Response	2023 Commit
BATH, ST. JOHN-5001	0.00	250.00	125.00	4,000.00	4,202.50	4,000.00
CATASAUQUA, HOLY TRINITY-5002	160.00	478.00	0.00	10,200.00	15,200.00	10,800.00
CHERRYVILLE, HOPE-5004	1,428.65	0.00	1,756.38	39,655.00	39,655.00	41,240.00
COPLAY, ST. JOHN-5005	990.00	2,800.00	0.00	11,250.00	11,250.00	11,500.00
EMANUELSVILLE, EMMANUEL-5006	1,574.00	0.00	1,150.00	28,500.00	28,500.00	29,000.00
HEIDELBERG, HEIDELBERG-5007	921.00	2,288.00	921.00	0.00	921.50	0.00
SLATEDALE, HOLY TRINITY-5008	0.00	200.00	350.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
KREIDERSVILLE, GOOD SHEPHERD-5010	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	4,587.00	0.00
LOWHILL TWN SP, MORGENLAND-5011	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
NAZARETH, ST. JOHN-5013	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,000.00	0.00
SCHNECKSVILLE, UNION-5014	3,570.00	1,000.00	3,020.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
NEW TRIPOLI, NEW LIFE-5015	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,248.00	0.00
NORTHAMPTON, HOLY TRINITY-5016	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00
NORTHAMPTON, ZION-5017	3,676.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,400.00	8,400.00
NORTHAMP HOLY TRINITY SLOVAK-5018	360.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
SLATINGTON, ST. JOHN-5019	0.00	250.00	140.00	2,500.00	5,405.00	2,500.00
OREFIELD, JORDAN-5020	2,504.46	1,270.79	785.00	20,000.00	19,929.21	20,000.00
WEISENBERG TWP, WEISENBERG-5021	5,260.00	2,462.00	2,980.00	0.00	19,321.97	0.00
WEISENBERG TWP, ZIEGELS-5022	770.00	1,400.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00
WHITEHALL, FAITH-5023	1,290.25	4,125.00	135.50	22,000.00	25,666.62	0.00
WHITEHALL, SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS-5024	1,661.00	0.00	313.03	17,534.00	17,534.00	18,174.00
BELFAST, GRACE-5026	825.00	600.00	534.01	4,600.00	4,600.00	4,600.00
WHITEHALL, ST. JOHN-5027	905.00	400.00	375.00	0.00	7,124.00	6,975.00
HECKTOWN, TRINITY-5028	353.07	500.00	257.00	0.00	17,000.00	17,000.00
KEMPTON, JERUSALEM (RED)-5029	0.00	0.00	300.00	0.00	1,700.00	5,000.00
NORTHERN LEHIGH VALLEY MISC.-5099	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	26,248.68	18,023.79	13,141.92	178,439.00	271,444.80	191,889.00

Total churches responding

15

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Note: Amounts above do not include ben evolutions sent directly to agenices.

Pocono Mission District Treasurer's Acknowledgement 2022

Location, Congregation	World	Homes &	Other	2022	2022	2023
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Com mit	Response	Com mit
	2022	2022	2022			
ALBRIGHTSVILLE, ST. PAUL-6001	0.00	900.00	0.00	5,200.00	5,208.00	2,000.00
APPENZELL, ST. MARK-6002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,990.00	0.00
BANGOR, TRINITY-6003	75.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,185.00	1,300.00
BLAKESLEE, FAITH-6005	0.00	0.00	550.00	5,400.00	5,400.00	5,400.00
BRODHEADSVILLE, ZION UNITED-6006	192.80	32.38	166.40	6,000.00	11,500.00	6,000.00
SMITHFIELD, ST. PAUL-6007	0.00	0.00	1,251.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	0.00
DINGMAN'S FERRY, HOLY TRINITY-6008	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	3,600.00	0.00
EFFORT, ST. JOHN-6010	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,700.00
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	210.00	0.00
HAMILTON SQUARE, CHRIST-6013	20.00	20.00	1,900.00	0.00	210.00	0.00
HAWLEY, ST. PAUL-6014	275.00	0.00	0.00	2,400.00	2,250.00	1,200.00
HONSDALE, ST. JOHN-6015	130.55	0.00	0.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
JOHNSONVILLE/PRINCE OF PEACE-6016	1,471.00	1,271.00	315.00	16,785.00	20,074.12	17,604.00
KRESGEVILLE, SALEM-ST. PAUL-6017	1,910.20	99.00	1,004.50	5,500.00	3,572.00	5,500.00
MINISINK HILLS, ST. MARK-6019	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00	0.00
PEN ARGYL, ST. JOHN-6020	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	600.00	500.00
PLAINFIELD, ST. PETER-6021	635.00	120.00	1,139.30	16,000.00	15,999.96	0.00
SCOTRUN, ST. JOHN-6023	1,338.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,600.00	2,600.00
SHOHOLA, ST. JACOBI-6024	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,020.00	1,020.00	0.00
STONE CHURCH, CHRIST-6025	50.00	310.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
STROUDSBURG, ST. JOHN-6026	1,330.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
TANNERSVILLE, ST. PAUL-6027	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,700.00	2,700.00	2,800.00
POCONO DISTRICT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	7,928.49	2,752.38	7,326.20	82,305.00	97,719.08	56,004.00

Total churches responding

16

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

Schuylkill Mission District Treasurer's Acknowledgement 2022

Location, Congregation	World Hunger 2022	Homes & Agencies 2022	Other ELCA 2022	2022 Commit	2022 Response	2023 Com mit
ASHLAND, GOOD SHEPHERD-7001	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,550.00	2,031.00	3,500.00
AU BURN, ST. JOHN-7002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,070.00	900.00
FRACKVILLE, ZION-7003	0.00	0.00	605.00	5,300.00	5,331.00	5,300.00
FRIEDENSBURG, ST. JOHN-7004	195.00	358.00	360.84	5,000.00	5,021.00	5,000.00
ASHLAND, CHRIST. UNITED-7005	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,475.00	0.00
HEGINS, FRIEDENS-7006	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00
PITMAN, ST. JAMES-7007	4,120.00	0.00	0.00	8,000.00	6,981.17	8,000.00
LLEWELLYN, FRIEDENS-7009	100.00	0.00	0.00	700.00	55.00	600.00
MINERSVILLE, ZION-7010	1,679.00	0.00	429.00	0.00	1,257.50	0.00
BUCK RUN, TRINITY-7012	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,200.00	2,300.00	2,500.00
ORWIGSBURG, ST. PAUL-7013	0.00	0.00	3,400.00	7,300.00	9,203.00	8,000.00
ORWIGSBURG RD, ZION-7014	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
PINE GROVE, ST. JOHN-7015	770.00	0.00	380.00	0.00	1,215.00	0.00
PINE GROVE, ST. PETER-7016	2,469.00	0.00	335.00	0.00	2,206.00	0.00
PINE GROVE RD 1, JACOBS-7017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,965.50	0.00
PINE GROVE RD 1, OUTWOOD-7018	0.00	0.00	1,361.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
PINE GROVE, SALEM-HETZELS-7019	5,536.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	4,000.00
PORT CARBON, ST. PAUL-7020	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,200.00	1,000.00
MIDDLEPORT, ST. PAUL-7021	0.00	0.00	0.00	480.00	480.00	480.00
POTTSVILLE, TRINITY-7022	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,304.26	0.00
RAVINE, ST. MATTHEW-7023	4,916.00	0.00	800.00	0.00	5,949.50	0.00
REINERTON, ST. PETER-7024	605.00	0.00	1,421.00	0.00	1,485.00	1,200.00
SUMMER HILL, ST. PAUL-7027	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,200.00	2,000.00
TOWER CITY, ST. PAUL-7028	600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
TREMONT, ST. JOHN-7029	275.00	0.00	0.00	400.00	400.00	300.00
VALLEY VIEW, TRINITY-7030	95.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,423.00	0.00
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, JERUSALEM-7033	1,275.00	35.00	2,782.90	14,000.00	10,403.59	0.00
SCHUYLKILL DISTRICT MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	23,635.62	393.00	11,874.99	51,730.00	107,756.52	43,780.00

Total churches responding

13

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

SCRANTON-WILKES BARRE MISSION DISTRICT TREASURER'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR 2022

Location, Congregation	World	Homes &	Other	2022	2022	2023
	Hunger	Agencies	ELCA	Commit	Response	Commit
	2022	2022	2022			
ARCHBALD, ST. LUKE-8001	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DUSHORE, SHEPHERD OF HILLS-8003	781.00	568.30	0.00	6,700.00	6,722.99	2,090.00
HOBBI E, ST. JAMES-8004	975.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,131.00	5,000.00
POND HILL, ST. MARK-8005	0.00	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	2,000.00
MOUNTAINTOP, ST. PAUL-8007	750.00	0.00	300.00	6,500.00	4,874.96	0.00
NANTICOKE, ST. JOHN-8008	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ZENITH, ST. JAMES-8011	200.00	0.00	342.00	0.00	1,284.75	0.00
HUGHESTOWN, ST. PETER-8012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,118.00	0.00
SAYRE, ST. JOHN-8013	487.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	390.00	3,000.00
NESCOPECK, FAITH UNITED-8016	914.28	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,563.28	5,000.00
SCRANTON, ST. PETER-8017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DALLAS, ST. PAUL-8018	590.18	900.00	3,090.02	14,328.00	12,300.00	12,372.00
TOWANDA, TRINITY-8019	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,075.00	4,075.00	0.00
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	0.00	0.00	0.00
SCRANTON, ST. MATTHEW UNITED-8025	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,200.00	5,265.00	0.00
SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE MISC.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DISTRICT TOTALS	4,697.46	1,468.30	3,732.02	42,803.00	51,375.02	29,462.00

Total churches responding

6

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

WEST BERKS MISSION DISTRICT TREASURER'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR 2022

Location, Congregation	World Hunger 2022	Homes & Agencies 2022	Other ELCA 2022	2022 Commit	2022 Response	2023 Commit
KNAUERS, ALLEGHENY-9001	10,536.50	0.00	0.00	15,300.00	15,300.00	15,300.00
BERN TOWNSHIP, BERN-9002	1,500.00	0.00	1,490.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
BERN VILLE, FRIEDENS-9003	1,189.00	0.00	50.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
BIRDSBORO, ST. MARK-9004	2,284.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,859.00	4,000.00
GEIGERTOWN, ST. JAMES-9005	1,968.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	1,188.00	5,000.00
GOUGLERSVILLE, TRINITY-9007	0.00	0.00	400.00	0.00	600.00	600.00
GRILL, CHRIST-9008	0.00	0.00	1,415.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
JACKSONWALD, SCHWARZWALD-9009	225.00	0.00	0.00	10,868.00	10,868.00	12,000.00
LAURELDALE, CALVARY-9010	635.00	0.00	914.00	0.00	12,028.50	0.00
MOHNTON, ST. JOHN-9011	0.00	0.00	3,462.50	8,300.00	8,304.00	8,725.00
MT PENN, FAITH-9012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,299.96	5,400.00
PLOWVILLE, ROBESON-9013	1,862.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
READING, CHRIST-9015	823.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
READING, GOOD SHEPHERD-9016	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,800.00	4,800.00
READING, GRACE-9017	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,200.00	3,200.04	0.00
READING, HOLY SPIRIT-9018	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,400.00	2,400.00	0.00
READING, HOPE-9019	605.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	2,470.00	3,000.00
READING, INCARNATION-9020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
READING, NATIVITY-9021	360.00	0.00	4,370.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
READING, ST. JOHN-9024	88.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	22,916.67	0.00
READING, ST. LUKE-9025	70.00	0.00	50.00	1,500.00	1,410.00	0.00
READING, ST. MARK-9026	256.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
READING, ST. PAUL-9027	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,700.00	2,700.00	2,712.00
READING, TRINITY-9028	0.00	0.00	0.00	56,000.00	56,000.00	0.00
BETHEL, SALEM-9030	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	909.00	1,500.00
REIFFTON, REFORMATION-9031	3,410.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22,370.77	21,656.00
ROBESONIA, ST. DANIEL-9032	1,640.00	0.00	11,177.10	13,800.00	9,200.00	4,020.00
ROBESONIA, TRINITY-9033	2,528.00	0.00	2,700.00	56,000.00	42,500.00	0.00
SHILLINGTON, GRACE-9035	939.00	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	6,960.00	6,300.00
STONY CREEK MILLS, BETHANY-9037	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,510.00	3,000.00
STOUCHSBURG, CHRIST-9038	1,185.00	0.00	1,800.57	0.00	400.00	0.00
WERNERSVILLE, TRINITY-9042	1,020.00	0.00	0.00	19,309.00	19,308.96	19,290.00
WEST LAWN, ADVENT-9043	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,310.65	0.00
WEST READING, BETHANY-9044	375.00	800.00	300.00	0.00	3,100.00	0.00
WOMELSDORF, ZION-9045	0.00	180.00	0.00	0.00	3,700.00	3,700.00
WYOMISSING, ATONEMENT-9046	4,274.00	0.00	0.00	54,000.00	54,000.00	62,000.00
WYOMISSING, COMMON GROUND MINISTRIES-9047	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,000.00	0.00
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	1,000.00	0.00	0.00
READING, HMONG COMMUNITY-9052	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
WEST BERKS MISC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL WEST BERKS	37,797.50	980.00	28,634.17	293,077.00	372,313.55	209,203.00

Total churches responding

21

25

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

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

2022 Synod Assembly Minutes

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Friday, June 10, 2022, 1:00 p.m.

OPENING WORSHIP. The 2022 Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), meeting electronically on June 10 and 11, 2022, began at 12:30 p.m. on June 10 with gathering music as follows: “Of Faith and Hope” by Ian Cunningham; “Prayer for Peace” by musicians from Advent, West Lawn; “Walking” by New Life, New Tripoli; “Ode to Joy” by Weisenberg, Weisenberg Township; “Stronger” by Atone-ment, Wyomissing; “We Are Not Alone” by Hope, Cherryville; “All Creatures of Our God and King” by Weisenberg; and “Wondrous Are Your Ways, O God” by Salem-St. Paul, Kresgeville. A video affirming “let’s be the church” was shown before prayer, which was offered by Synod Council member Daniel Tobey.

ASSEMBLY OPENING. Bishop deForest called the first plenary session of the assembly to order at 1:15 p.m. He stated the assembly theme, “Stronger Together,” and introduced his partner in conducting the assembly, Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner. They thanked the persons who helped to make the assembly possible in an online format, notably Events Staging of Conrad Bartholomew, and explained the ways in which voting members could participate and vote in the assembly. Bishop deForest asserted that a quorum was present and led the assembly in the Order for the Opening of a Synod Assembly. He acknowledged that the assembly was taking place in locations of the ancestral and ongoing homelands of the Lenni Lenape peoples, honoring their cultural heritage in accordance with the commitments stated in the ELCA’s *A Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People*.

ASSEMBLY PROGRAM, 2021 MINUTES. Vice President Edelman-Weiner explained that the proposed agenda for the assembly had been approved by the Synod Council and included in the 2022 Bulletin of Reports prepared for this assembly. On behalf of the council the Rev. Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary, then presented the following resolution: *Resolved*, That the 2022 Assembly program as printed in the Bulletin of Reports be adopted. The motion was adopted by a vote of 238 Yes to 2 No; the voting took place electronically.

Secretary Shankweiler reported that copies of the 2021 Assembly Minutes have been certified by the bishop and secretary and prepared for deposit in the archives, with the 2021 as-

sembly minutes included on pages 82 to 95 in the 2022 Bulletin of Reports.

THANK-YOUs AND INTRODUCTIONS. Bishop deForest expressed the synod's thanks to Ms. Edelman-Weiner and to members of the staff and Assembly Planning Team for bringing together this online assembly, which originally was expected to be an in-person assembly until the Synod Council decided in January that it would be safer to meet again online. The hope is to hold the 2023 assembly at the Kalahari Resort. He mentioned specifically the election team headed by the Rev. Kenneth T. Melber Jr.; synod staff members Eric Gombert, Stacey Burke, 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; Laurie Christman, the assembly's registrar, and Deborah Skinner; the assembly worship team with co-leaders the Rev. Chris Druckenmiller and the Rev. Deborah Taylor and all of the musicians who provided video segments; the creators of the Growing Young segments, i.e., the Rev. Lauren Applegate and Growing Young Coordinator Stacey Burke; Daniel Raudenbush and his video team for segments that show how the synod is Stronger Together; the Program Committee of the Synod Council, chaired by Amy Mietelski; the synod's Director for Evangelical Mission, the Rev. Dr. D. Michael Bennethum; the Rev. Rachael Dietz, the bishop's Executive Associate for Leadership, for assisting with leadership and parliamentary procedure; Pastor Shankweiler; and Ms. Edelman-Weiner.

Ms. Edelman-Weiner welcomed as a special guest the Rev. Kimberly Vaughn, ELCA Senior Director for Christian Community and Leadership Mission, who spoke briefly.

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

- He read Mark 13:7-8 and its advice, "Do not be alarmed," which seems appropriate to us given COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, concerning which as of May 31, 2022, the congregations of the synod "have given \$32,348.00 in support of relief efforts in Ukraine."
- He noted "a resilience, a readiness for action" in the face of the pandemic, which shows that we understand that we are Stronger Together and that "combining our strengths and relying fully on our Source of all strength—our Almighty God—is our best way forward."
- He explained that the synod is on a "three-lane highway—three vital sign goals" with "Jesus leading the way."
- He spoke of the first goal, Growing Young, and the 2021 Ministry Laboratory. This goal involves "acting as a Jesus-centered community that is committed to engaging and retaining people of all ages, especially those fifteen to twenty-nine years." A big step was Stacey Burke's assuming the role of Growing Young Coordinator; with Pastor Applegate, the ELCA, and ecumenical partners "we are all still growing younger together."
- The second vital sign goal, Gaining Strength, "declares two realities: that our synod is already filled with God-given strengths" and that "when we combine those strengths, we can go further, faster, and for a longer period of time, bringing more along and having more to share." He listed synod staff and other partners in this effort, including the Rev. Douglas Hill, who is working with the synod's first Gaining Strength Cohort, and the Center for Congregational Health.

- The third vital sign goal, Going Beyond Death to Life, “ties us to the very grounding of our Christian witness and mystery of faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” This effort is led by Deacon Travis Woodfield, our Director of Legacy and Purpose. He explained, “We hope to help every congregation work out a plan for a faithful, lasting legacy.” By the end of 2023 he anticipates “legacy and purpose teams” to guide congregations “in spiritual and in practical matters.” This emphasis will deal with an outside partner, Partners for Sacred Places, concerning how to deal with physical property and other physical assets.

- Bishop deForest spoke about the need to “reconsider new versions” of the previously suspended SALM program (Synodically Authorized Lay Minister), such as the Pastoral Care Provider Program, which can be considered for greater expansion, and other new models.

- He acknowledged the many “willing and experienced active and retired pastors and deacons” and partners such as the United Lutheran Seminary, Moravian Seminary, and the online Neighborhood Seminary willing to assist in the training and supervising of SALMs.

- He pointed to efforts for continuing to enhance synodical communications under the leadership of the Rev. Lauren Wolfe Blatt, Director of Communications, such as the redesigned website. Also, an improved database system called Realm is being used and will be increasingly accessible; Mr. Gombert and others are involved in developing this resource. There will be a communication audit and the development of a crisis communication plan to address emergencies.

- He spoke about his desire that the synod become “one of the best places for deacons in the ELCA.” Acknowledging the many roles that deacons already play in the church, he asked, “What if deacons were to play a leading role in encouraging and empowering . . . connections?” He spoke of the potential for deacons to be “free agents shared by several congregations, or working across the synod in what’s called a *synod call*.”

- In conclusion, Bishop deForest said, “Where can all this lead? Today we are 248 congregations, with three synod authorized worshipping communities, bringing together over 118,000 baptized members. The data projections all show that these two numbers have been 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 and 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 resources, share 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 across our synod. 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 number in the year 2022?” Is it forty? Or fifty? Or sixty? Or much more? What if, by 2026, we double that number? If sixty, 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!"

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS. A video related to Stronger Together was then shown. It featured six congregations with four pastoral care leaders working together in the Pine Grove area. Nancy Reichelt of St. Peter, Pine Grove, explained the background, participants, current activities, and planned events of this effort, which began from actions taken within the Schuylkill Mission District Council.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS. Pastor Dietz, in her capacity as chairperson of the Nominating Committee, which has in effect been the entire Synod Council, explained that there had been general calls for nominees, the approaching of specific persons, and a focusing on underrepresented groups. Nominees were sought for Synod Council positions:

Two open positions for lay males.

One open position for a lay female.

One open position for a male (either lay or clergy) person of color or whose first language is other than

English.

One open position for a female (either lay or clergy) person of color or whose first language is other

than English.

She explained that nominations could still be made from the floor.

Bishop deForest then opened the floor for nominations by these specific categories. The following persons were nominated:

Richard DeLuca for the position of Synod Council, lay male (by himself).

Dr. Helen Davis for the position of Synod Council, lay female (by the Rev. Michelle Kaufman).

No persons were nominated for either of the positions for persons of color or whose first language is other than English.

The bishop declared the time for nominations ended and explained that nominating forms with biographical information were needed by 7:00 p.m. on that same day.

Notice was then given that an additional person wanted to make a nomination. Pastor Shankweiler, seconded by Pastor Applegate, moved that the nomination process be reopened. The resolution passed 231 Yes to 16 No.

The bishop then opened the floor for nominations to any of the Synod Council positions. Leanna Wickline then nominated the Rev. Rashion Santiago for a position on the Synod Council for a female of color or whose first language is other than English.

There being no additional nominations, Bishop deForest declared the close of nominations for Synod Council and said that the elections would occur at the appropriate time in the agenda. He explained that where there are no nominees, the Synod Council will appoint persons to serve until the next synod assembly.

GROWING YOUNG. Bishop deForest spoke about Growing Young as a vital sign goal and introduced Pastor Applegate, convenor of the synod's Youth, Young Adult, and Family Ministry Team. She spoke about the work that she, Bishop deForest, and Deacon Kathleen Schaeffer did in crafting the new position of Growing Young Coordinator. She then, in turn, introduced Stacey Burke, who is serving in that position. Pastor Applegate and Ms. Burke then held a dialogue about Growing Young in the time of sometimes being excited about the growth and potential in our communities and at other times being overwhelmed by the state of the world and the changing connections the church has in our communities. They spoke about the importance of God's assurance of being present with us.

Pastor Applegate and Ms. Burke talked about the effect that the pandemic has had on ministry, including that "people are more hesitant to engage for a variety of reasons, resulting in fewer numbers" and that "conversations and relationships that were once healthy may be more complicated as people process the traumatic happenings of these recent years." There is the need to "build back with intention," for which Growing Young can be a helpful tool.

They spoke of Growing Young as a resource that "explores six core characteristics of Jesus-centered communities that are actively involving and retaining people of all ages, especially people ages fifteen to twenty-nine": (1) keychain leadership, (2) empathizing with today's young people, (3) taking Jesus' message seriously, (4) fueling warm community through warm relationships, (5) prioritizing young people and their families everywhere, and (6) being the best neighbors.

They focused on the fifth of those characteristics (prioritizing young people and their families) as a characteristic that everyone can work on. To explain what that point means, they showed a video in which a fictitious congregation council was concerned about budgeting and spending in relation to a preschool housed in their church building. How do we prioritize young people when making a budget?

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, including how resolutions received "less than two weeks before the opening of the synod assembly" can be considered provided that the assembly agrees to do so by a majority vote. Directions were given to the website location of the resolutions already received. He thanked those who serve on the committee and those who submitted resolutions for the assembly to consider.

GROWING YOUNG VIDEO. A second Growing Young video was shown that suggested attending sports events in which young people are taking part in order to show interest in

them: "Maybe we should go to them."

STRONGER TOGETHER VIDEO. Another video was then shown on the assembly theme, Stronger Together. This video focused on an example from the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre Mission District. The Rev. Scott Harvey (a Lutheran pastor) and the Rev. Melinda Artman (an Episcopal priest) explained how Lutheran (St. John) and Episcopal (Church of the Redeemer) congregations in Sayre came to share pastoral leadership and cooperate as each is willing in a wide range of ministries. They also discussed how they serve as an anchor parish in that region.

FIRST BALLOT. Bishop deForest called upon Pastor Melber to introduce the first ballot. Pastor Melber highlighted four persons running unopposed for seats on the Synod Council:

Stephen Hikes, Lay Male

Richard DeLuca, Lay Male

Dr. Helen Davis, Lay Female,

The Rev. Rashion Santiago, Female, Person of Color or Whose First Language is Other Than English

Given that these persons were all running unopposed, Bishop deForest declared them elected by acclamation.

Pastor Melber, seconded by Pastor Dietz, then moved to elect two persons nominated by their mission districts for seats on the Synod Council:

Andrew Hottenstein, by the Hazleton-Lehigh Mission District.

The Rev. Chris Druckenmiller, by the Pocono Mission District.

The motion was then voted upon with the results being announced during Session Two.

END OF SESSION. Secretary Shankweiler gave the end-of-session announcements. The session ended at 3:00 p.m.

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Friday, June 10, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

SESSION OPENING. Following gathering music, a Ministry Partner video concerning Portico Benefits Services was shown; this presentation featured Portico's President and CEO the Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann and various other staff members. Ms. Edelman-Weiner called the second plenary session to order at 3:30 p.m. The Worship Team provided opening devotions, including music by Advent, West Lawn, and leadership by the Rev. Deborah Taylor with John 17:11 as the key verse and Visio Divina as the approach, using an image on which to focus with meditation.

A second Ministry Partner video featuring the United Lutheran Seminary was shown. The seminary's president, the Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, and the Rev. Dr. Martin Otto-Zimmann, Senior Director of Continuing Education, thanked the synod for its support of the seminary, which over the past thirty years was said to total \$3.6 million in financial support and many positive interactions. They expressed the seminary's desire to walk with the synod and have greater interaction with the people within the synod who want to know more and are seeking after truth in an "open seminary." New opportunities to engage with the faculty were explained. learningwishlist@uls.edu was offered as a way to make requests.

ELECTIONS: FIRST BALLOT REPORT. Pastor Melber presented the report of the Elections Committee. He announced the results of the First Ballot, namely, the vote concerning the motion to elect Mr. Hottenstein and Pastor Druckenmiller as nominees of their respective mission districts. The results were 247 Yes to 6 No. Bishop deForest then confirmed that those persons were elected. Pastor Melber stated that this report concluded the election process for this assembly.

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 the Rev. Kimberly A. Vaughn, the ELCA's Senior Director of Christian Community and Leadership Mission.

In his own remarks, Mr. Jennings explained that his six-year time on the Church Council of the ELCA was coming to an end. He spoke about the people he met on this "journey": (1) churchwide staff, whom he identified as "good people" of "high character who want to make a difference"; (2) bishops, who are "operation managers" adding an incredible perspective; (3) fellow members of the council who come with varied credentials and experiences but share a "love of our Lord"; (4) ecumenical representatives, who wrestle with some of the same issues as we; (5) Lori Fedyk, the ELCA's treasurer, with whom he worked on the Budget and Finance Committee; (6) the late William Horne, who as vice president attended the 2020 assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; (7) Kristen Edelman-Weiner, synod staff, and the synod's council for allowing him time at council meetings. He explained how he was chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, on the Executive Committee, which meets monthly, and on the Board Development Committee, which plans learning opportunities for the Church Council and tries to help the council run smoothly. He led the Process Observation program to see how the council functions. He served on more short-term assignments such as preparing a manual on Church Council governance. He served on the 2019 Reference and Counsel Committee for the churchwide assembly and assisted with memorials in 2022. He thanked former Bishop Samuel Zeiser for reaching out to him in 2016 as a potential council member, for which he was elected. He then introduced Pastor Vaughn as someone who works to "energize new, young, and diverse people."

Pastor Vaughn then spoke, beginning with the extension of greetings from the synod's churchwide partners. She spoke of having begun her current position on June 1, 2021, and observed that prior to COVID most of the churchwide staff lived in Chicago but that now "new hires" tend to be out in other places. She spoke about her background in Michigan, Ohio, and Texas, including dealing with youth and outdoor ministries, first in Ohio and more

recently in New Jersey. She asked, “How do we seek to live out God’s reign of justice and love?” She listed the ELCA’s Future Church goals: “A welcoming church—engaging new, young and diverse people.” “A thriving church—rooted in tradition and *radically* relevant.” “A connected, sustainable church—raising the bar together.” She spoke of the ELCA’s vision of a world “experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation” and of the Future Church’s purpose to “activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.”

She asked how the church does this work, answering that one way is through Mission Support, noting that the synod gave \$874,497 to the churchwide organization in the last year. This money helped to support new faith communities (both Common Ground communities and Hope’s Table in this synod) and Domestic Hunger Grants and Big Dream Grants (including Café Esperanza and Common Ground, Reading). She reported that more than \$2.1 million was given throughout the ELCA for COVID-19 work. The ELCA’s Fund for Leaders supported local seminarians David Corrado, Cody Danner, Dillon Epler, MaryAnn Farnsworth, Joshua Labadie-Gulotta, and Jayne Leh. She spoke about the companion synods to which the synod relates and some of the ELCA’s missionaries, such as Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson, Dr. Steven and Bethany Friberg, David and Kellen Msseemmaa, Aaron Decker, and Linda Jacobson. She spoke of the total given to World Hunger in 2021, \$22,924,057, of which the synod provided \$59,529.59. Lutheran Disaster Response was \$14,458,194, of which the synod gave \$26,041.50. The response to aid for Ukraine has been over \$8.9 million with \$32,347.83 from this synod.

She explained the work of the ELCA’s Christian Community and Leadership and listed many staff members for this work, including the Rev. Dr. Philip D. Hirsch, Executive Director. She said that in general her area is “faith formation, discipleship” including children and youth and many other areas. Mission Builders is one of her unit’s projects, and Total Inclusion is a new program that deals with including persons of diverse kinds in camping. She thanked the members of the synod who assist with the churchwide work and the work of specially incorporated ministries, mentioning among others James Jennings of the Church Council, the Rev. Cheryl Meinschein Hausman of the Committee on Appeals, and the Rev. Dr. Michael Bennethum, the synod’s Director for Evangelical Mission. She thanked Bishop deForest for the invitation to attend this assembly and for his care of the synod’s people. She mentioned the ELCA’s Churchwide Assembly for August 8-12, 2022, in Columbus, Ohio; spoke of the Rostered Ministers Gathering for July 17-20, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona; and explained that the 2022 Youth Gathering was cancelled but would be held again in 2024 in New Orleans. She highlighted *All Creation Sings*, a new worship supplement.

She concluded, “We can grow stronger in faith, in love, and in service.” Her spoken remarks were followed by a video featuring Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, who began with the example of Martin Luther and how the new printing press was used in his time to extend God’s message to people. She affirmed that we, too, “can tell the old, old story in a new way.”

VIDEO RE. STRONGER TOGETHER. A video on the theme of Stronger Together was shown about ministry occurring in Kutztown. The featured speaker was Seth Noggle, Director of

Youth and Family Ministry at Trinity, Kutztown, which wanted to invest in more youth work; this work now includes other congregations in the area. Kutztown Strong is an organization he is involved with, as is the Oasis Youth Center, an after-school ministry. He is involved with the Lutheran Center at Kutztown University and a student food pantry. He spoke of the need and future of the church to be missional, doing best when it is outside the church.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Dr. Donald Boyer, Treasurer, presented the Report of the Treasurer. He began by thanking the congregations for their generous support, adding that COVID and inflation have added to the difficulty of church finances. In addition to his printed report, he and Ms. Louise McCloughan, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, explained the synod's financial income and expenses through a visual report, showing how they are used to carry out the work of the synod. Dr. Boyer thanked the staff members who deal with the synod's finances (Deborah Skinner, Stacey Burke, and Eric Gombert) and Chairperson Louise McCloughan and the members of the Finance Committee. A chart of revenue and spending for the last six years was shown, noting the years when spending exceeded income (2016, 2017) and when income exceeded spending (2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021). For the fiscal year February 1, 2021, through January 31, 2022, 93.3% of the synod's income came from Mission Support. In 2021 the synod spent \$112,450 less than was budgeted. Pointing to inflation-adjusted dollars, he noted that the synod lost \$339,262 in purchasing power since 2016, adding that if inflation occurs, the synod must either cut expenses or find additional revenue. He spoke to the difficulty in planning because of the unknown in our financial future and addressed the issues related to the synod's fiscal year being different from that of most congregations and the agencies that the synod supports.

Ms. McCloughan presented the resolution concerning the 2023 Spending Plan, which projected \$2,061,400 in both revenues and expenses. This plan and the related resolution (see below) came from the Synod Council, and the resolution was adopted on a vote of 248 Yes to eight No. Prior to the vote, Bishop deForest had opened the floor to any members wanting to speak to the spending plan; no one did.

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).

MISSION INTERPRETERS. Georgia Suranofsky, the co-chair of the synod's Mission Interpreter Program, spoke about that effort to communicate with congregations about the ministries of the synod and ELCA. The other co-chairperson is Charlotte Gross. She said that Mission Support giving matters; it is used for ministries. She spoke about the value of telling stories as putting us "in the shoes of others" and how stories can be inspiring and challenging. The example she used was to talk about how the synod's Racial Justice Team was formed as the result of an on-line event dealing with racism. She compared troubled, raging waters, as in a white-water rafting experience, to the calm, peaceful waters of a baptismal font, adding how congregations can be welcoming of all people and focus on racial justice. Speaking about giving through Mission Support and designated giving, she pointed out that "we

bring honor to God” by sharing the stories that God allows us to be part of.

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. She mentioned the in-person event to be held in October to celebrate the rostered leaders who are celebrating major anniversaries or who retired since the June 2021 assembly. She stressed the fact that pastors come from congregations when the possibility of ordained ministry is presented to persons thought to have those gifts. She mentioned two candidates who are receiving full support through the Fund for Leaders, one for Word and Sacrament and one for Word and Service. She then identified the following persons:

Jamie Edelman, candidate for the Word and Sacrament ministry.

The Rev. Halle Kluever, ordained August 1, 2021, and serving St. John, Slatington.

The Rev. Scott Harvey, ordained December 12, 2021, and serving St. John Lutheran and with Redeemer Episcopal Church, Sayre.

Deacon Dawn Talley, ordained May 1, 2022, and serving as chaplain at Geisinger, Scranton, and St. Joseph’s as well as working at Holy Trinity, Kingston.

The Rev. Mary Button, ordained by the Metro New York Synod and serving St. Luke’s, Greeley, as part of Lutheran Witness on the Delaware, a ministry that involves the Northeastern Pennsylvania and Metro New York Synods.

Four pastors came into the synod since the last assembly:

The Rev. Matthew Hacker

The Rev. Rachel Hacker

The Rev. Richard Mathisen

The Rev. Janelle Neubauer

She acknowledged eleven pastors who retired since the last assembly:

The Rev. Kathleen Ash-Flashner

The Rev. T. Daniel Clayborne

The Rev. MaryAnn Hamm

The Rev. Lesley Hand

The Rev. Melinda Heppe

The Rev. Denise Keltz

The Rev. Jeffrey Odgren

The Rev. Peggy Sue Pfeffer

The Rev. David Rowe

The Rev. Alan Wolkenhauer

The Rev. Phyllis Wolkenhauer

A video was shown concerning the anniversaries of rostered leaders for 2022, which were listed in the Report of the Committee of Deans.

END OF SESSION ANNOUNCEMENTS. Pastor Shankweiler made announcements. Ms. Edelman-Weiner declared the session to be ended at 5:30 p.m.

FESTIVAL WORSHIP. At 6:30 p.m. the Festival Worship service was held. The music before and during the service included “Winter Spirits” by Weisenberg, Weisenberg Township; “One Day” by Hope, Cherryville; “The Line Between the Two” by Trinity, Lansford; “Carry Me Through” by Salem-St. Paul, Kresgeville; “Walking” and “Give Me Your Eyes” by New Life, New Tripoli; “Everlasting God” and “Kingdom” by Emmanuel’s, Bath; and “Stronger” by Atonement, Wyomissing. There were various worship leaders with the sermon by Bishop deForest based on Isaiah 40:28-31.

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Saturday, June 11, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

SESSION OPENING. Gathering music by Ian Cunningham preceded the session opening along with “Faithful to the End”; “Carry Me Through” and “Windrows Are Your Ways” by Salem-St. Paul, Kresgeville; “Winter Spirits” by Weisenberg, Weisenberg Township; and “We Are Not Alone” by Hope, Cherryville. A Ministry Partner Video was shown of Lutheran Congregational Services featuring Julia Menzo. The opening worship video featured a musical piece from Advent, West Lawn.

ELCA REPRESENTATIVE. Pastor Vaughn began her second session by quoting Isaiah 40:28-31, “Have you not heard? . . . those who wait for the LORD . . . shall walk and not faint.” She also quoted a Michael Jackson song, “You are not alone. . . . You are always in my heart,” observing that we are not meant to struggle by ourselves. We are meant to bear one another’s journeys. We should always be learning about others and about God. We are to bring more people into the journey that is the Jesus story and go on this journey together. She asked the assembly members to think of a journey they took and what was needed. On the Jesus journey, the map is Jesus. The hills are hard to climb, and so we need someone to hold us up and help us along, even carry us. “We are growing young, gaining strength, and going beyond death to life. Encourage each other; pray for each other. And at time stop and look at God at work and stand in awe. God will hold us in God’s most perfect hands.” She concluded with prayer.

AMENDING THE AGENDA. It was found that one category was missed when electing persons to the Synod Council, namely, two clergy seats. Ms. Edelman-Weiner presented a resolution to amend the agenda in order to open the floor to nominations and then hold an election, asking for unanimous consent for this to occur. There were no objections, and the matter was added to the agenda for later in this session.

GROWING YOUNG SEGMENT. Pastor Applegate and Ms. Burke presented another segment about Growing Young with a focus on what it means to prioritize young people and their families in congregational life. They observed, “Instead of preserving what we are used to or have become accustomed to, we begin to shift priority and preference to those who are easily silenced or cast out.”

ELECTION TO SYNOD COUNCIL Ms. Edelman-Weiner called for nominations from the floor for the two clergy seats on the Synod Council that required elections at this assembly. Bishop deForest said that there were currently two nominees: Deacon Linda Zawaski and the Rev. Maritza Dolich. When he asked for any further nominations from the floor and there were none, he declared these two persons elected to three-year terms on the Synod Council.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT; REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL. Kristen Edelman-Weiner quoted from the synod's constitution (*S6.03.) to make the point that we are interdependent with each other. She used as an image the meadow next top her house, which was allowed to go back to nature and where a patch of milkweed has become a magnet for butterflies. Certain bees and wasps feed on the milkweed flowers as well. All are interconnected; and without birds, butterflies, or other aspects of nature, all would be diminished. The synod is no different, she asserted. There is "beautiful connectedness." What we do in our own small corners helps or hurts. We give and we receive.

She spoke about the Synod Council as the place that the "buck stops." She said that no one person has control and that there are representatives from mission districts and from the synod at large as well as youth and the officers elected by the assembly. She pointed to *Robert's Rules of Order* as defining a way to operate in which all voices are heard in an equalized way. She further explained that if anything happened to the bishop, it is not the staff but the Synod Council that takes over, which she said she has seen happen in other synods. She encouraged participation in the life of the synod and invited the members of the assembly to consider taking places on committees, task forces, and the like and running for open seats at the next assembly. She explained how the council members took the ClifftenStrengths assessment to learn each person's unique strengths and to see how strengths can be shared and integrated. She said that the coming year would be her last as vice president but affirmed that she hoped to get out into congregations again. "You reinforce me. We . . . live in the fullness of Christ."

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 after the deadline for submitting resolutions and that the assembly needed to vote on whether to give this proposed resolution consideration. He then read the resolution.

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

The following resolution was submitted by Scherelene Schatz, Christ, Allentown

Date of submission: Friday, June 10, 2022.

"Resolved, That each mission district dean write a letter on behalf of his/her mission district membership to the senator representing them in Washington requesting them to cooperate in bipartisan talks on gun control regulations."

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Council regarding this resolution was as follows: "To refer to the Committee of Deans for consideration."

Pastor Heavner explained that the issue before the assembly was whether or not to give consideration of this resolution. Bishop deForest explained that in discussion there should be alternating speeches for and against consideration and that, if there were no objections, persons would be limited to speaking for two minutes each. There was no objection. Ms. Edelman-Weiner explained further that only registered voting members could speak.

Daniel Raudenbush spoke for the resolution; Bishop deForest pointed out that the discussion should focus on whether or not to consider the resolution, not on whether a person favors the resolution itself. The Rev. Thomas Irwin asked a point of order concerning the committee's recommendation; Pastor Heavner replied that the issue is whether or not to consider the resolution but that the committee wanted the assembly to be aware of their recommendation as a piece of information. Several persons had trouble making connections. The Rev. William Zimmerman said that dealing with the proposed resolution might be a waste of time in that deans do not have the authority to do what is asked in that the mission district members have not authorized them to speak; it might be better to find a way to deal with the issue as quickly as possible. Two persons expressed approval that the synod is considering the issue.

Pastor Deborah Taylor moved the previous question; Pastor Shankweiler seconded her motion. There was a problem in the voting process, but the vote to end debate was then passed 235 Yes to 8 No. But the vote on the basic issue of whether or not to grant consideration to the proposed resolution on gun control legislation could not be taken, and so the assembly moved on to the next Growing Young video.

GROWING YOUNG SEGMENT. Pastor Applegate and Ms. Burke addressed the issue of prioritizing young people through a video, "Diaper Dollars," in which a fictitious congregation council needed to face the issue of priorities.

Following the video, Bishop deForest explained that no voting could take place until Session Four because of technical difficulties.

MISSION INTERPRETERS: GOOD SHEPHERD. Mission Interpreter Charlotte Gross introduced a story about equipment to assist children to walk, which was told by Kimberly Stolarik of Good Shepherd Rehabilitation.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE. The Report of the Secretary, including action on bylaw revisions recommended by the Constitution Committee and Synod Council, was moved to the afternoon because of the technical difficulties in voting. Bishop deForest recommended that members log out and then log back in as a way to restore the ability to vote.

BEAR CREEK CAMP. Collin Grooms, Executive Director of Bear Creek Camp, showed a vid-

eo about Bear Creek Camp. He was joined by four youth staff members, who spoke about the effect that camping had on them.

END OF SESSION ANNOUNCEMENTS. Bishop deForest and Secretary Shankweiler made the closing announcements. The session ended at 12:00 noon.

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Saturday, June 11, 2022, 1:00 p.m.

SESSION OPENING. A Ministry Partner video was shown concerning Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, including a talk by LIRS staff member Chelsey Johnson. Devotional music was presented as follows: “Goodness Is Stronger than Evil” by musicians from Atone-ment, Wyomissing; “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me” by the Glory Ringers from Union, Schnecksville; and “Ode to Joy” by Weisenberg Lutheran Church. A video on the theme “together we can all do more” was shown of a boy who lost a ball and could retrieve it only when a large number of children helped him move a large rock. At 1:00 p.m. Bishop deForest called the fourth plenary session to order; Bethany Druckenmiller from St. Peter’s, Pen Ar-gyl, gave the opening prayer.

RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING REFERENCE AND COUNSEL AND THE CONSTITUTION. Bishop deForest directed the assembly in voting on matters that could not be considered in the third session.

First, a motion to end debate concerning the proposed sixth Reference and Counsel resolution concerning gun control legislation was considered; Bishop deForest called for a second to the motion, which was made by Pastor Shankweiler. That motion to end debate on the previous question was then adopted 238 Yes to 9 No. The vote on whether the assembly was willing to consider that proposed resolution was then taken and adopted by a vote of 169 Yes to 75 No. Bishop deForest explained that this resolution would be considered in its proper turn in the business of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

The proposed matters from the Constitution Committee were then explained by Pastor Shankweiler. First there was a recommendation endorsed by the Synod Council and, there-fore, coming from the council concerning BLS11.01.b.:

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

There was no discussion; this resolution was adopted by a vote of 246 Yes to 3 No.

The second recommendation originating in the Constitution Committee but coming to the assembly through an endorsement by the Synod Council concerned BLS13.21.:

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.”

There was no discussion; this resolution was adopted by a vote of 248 Yes to 4 No.

The Rev. Joseph Veres then raised a question concerning the meaning of “by reference” and the extent to which the synod was automatically accepting whatever the ELCA adopts. Bishop deForest allowed the question, even though it came after the time for discussion; and Pastor Shankweiler spoke about the relationship between the ELCA’s provisions and the synod’s own constitution and bylaws.

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR 2023. Pastor Dietz, speaking on behalf of the Leadership Development Ministry Team, presented the compensation guidelines for deacons and pastors. She encouraged congregations to thank their rostered leaders for service during the pandemic and noted that the guidelines deal with more than salary issues. The salary increases embedded in the proposal for 2023 are six percent. She drew the assembly’s attention to the proposed guidelines as found in the Bulletin of Reports.

Pastor Irwin was recognized; he encouraged the synod to see the charts’ top line of twenty-one years of service as not being a “cap” but as only the “end of the chart.” He recommended that a “multiplying factor” be included in the future to cover years beyond twenty-one.

Pastor Veres spoke in favor of Pastor Irwin’s point and recommended as well (1) considering advanced degrees as another factor to add to the charts and (2) making explicit special considerations that would be useful as rostered leaders approach retirement.

Bishop deForest then called for the vote on the guidelines that apply to pastors, which he declared adopted on a vote of 230 Yes to 22 No. Next, he called for the vote on the guidelines that apply to deacons, which he declared adopted on a vote of 240 Yes to 17 No.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL. Pastor Heavner brought to the assembly the first resolution, dealing with Roe v. Wade and its effect on pastoral counseling. [The committee recommended that the resolution be considered by the assembly.](#)

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING A CHANGE IN ROE V WADE AND ITS EFFECT UPON PASTORAL COUNSELING

The following resolution was submitted by James T. Parks, LPC, CLP, and the Rev. P. Wesley Poole.

“Whereas, there is the possibility that the decision Roe v Wade may be overturned or changed by the U.S. Supreme Court; and

“Whereas, several states either have passed legislation or intend to pass legislation limiting the right to an abortion or placing parameters upon those who seek an abortion or those who perform an abortion or persons who counsel or advise another person regarding an abortion; and

“Whereas, these parameters may include but not be limited to the revoking of one’s professional license, fines, and/or imprisonment; and

“Whereas, women and girls may seek out the counsel and advice of a professional in regards to an abortion decision; and

“Whereas, included in the group of professionals to whom a woman or girl may seek such counsel and advice are professional counselors, clergy, such as rostered ministers, and social ministry agencies and organizations which may provide counseling services; and

“Whereas, rostered ministers include pastors and deacons of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

“Whereas, depending upon the legislation of a given state or commonwealth, rostered ministers and social ministry agencies and organizations may be liable for content of any pastoral counseling sessions and possibly face fines and/or imprisonment or any other parameter of said legislation; and

“Whereas, depending upon the legislation of a given state or commonwealth, the legislation of that state or commonwealth may apply to any entity that provides pastoral counseling sessions to a person from the legislating state or commonwealth who may cross state or commonwealth or synodical boundaries in order to receive such services; and

“Whereas, such legislation may negate any HIPAA rules and/or confidentiality between the rostered minister and social ministry agency and organization and the pastor counseling client and the pastor/client relationships; therefore be it

“Resolved, That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be memorialized to investigate and ascertain the impact that any overturning of Roe v Wade and/or any legislation of any state or commonwealth of the USA will have upon pastoral counseling, the pastor/client relationship, and the rostered ministers and social ministry agencies and organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

“Resolved, That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be memorialized to offer support and legal referral to any rostered minister or affiliated counseling staff who may be affected by Roe v Wade changes, state or commonwealth legislation, license revoking, fines, and/or imprisonment.”

James Parks spoke in favor of the resolution and wanted the whereas sections to be read

along with the actual resolution, whereas Pastor Heavner read only the resolution to the assembly. Pastor Ware also spoke in favor of the resolution but wished for more advocating in favor of women's rights to have abortions. She then moved an amendment, namely, to add the words "Resolved, to find realistic, creative ways for rostered leaders to advocate for women's rights to have an abortion." This motion was seconded by the Rev. Kimberly Truebenbach.

Speaking to the amendment, Mr. Parks was opposed in that he thinks it should be a separate motion because it adds a different issue beyond pastoral care; Nadine Anderson affirmed the amendment because she felt abortion should be a woman's choice, though she would be fine with this issue as a separate motion; Patricia Rodgers spoke in favor of the amendment because she felt it is important to affirm a woman's right to make a decision concerning her own body; Amy Litinov opposed the amendment because she agreed that the issue should be a separate motion and pointed to the current uncertainty concerning what the Supreme Court and the Pennsylvania legislature will actually do.

Bishop deForest then acknowledged a point of order raised by Pastor Heavner, who pointed out that the deadline for submitting new resolutions had passed, making it impossible to present a new resolution. Lucille Gough said that the amendment should be a separate motion because it changes the entire motion; Ben Miller opposed adding the amendment because it represents a different issue; C.F. Verone also spoke against it, seeing it better as a separate motion; Pastor Ware spoke in favor, noting that there were three persons in a row speaking against the amendment instead of having alternating speakers and that she was still in favor of adding the amendment in that the ELCA is an agent of advocacy and this amendment would help to equip rostered leaders for advocacy. Bishop deForest replied to Pastor Ware that he could not guarantee alternating speakers because people do not always put in chat which position they are taking, so he asked for persons to indicate their positions. Pastor Truebenbach spoke in favor of the amendment, asserting that this is our only year for an ELCA assembly before which the right for an abortion could be lost ("We are out of time."); she also pointed to related health issues beyond abortion. Pastor Irwin spoke in favor but also asked whether "the right to an abortion" becomes moot if the Supreme Court takes away that right.

The Rev. Michael Petrusky, seconded by the Rev. Samantha Drennan, then moved the previous question. The vote on the previous question was adopted on a vote of 238 Yes to 23 No. The vote on adding the amendment was then taken immediately and failed by a vote of 107 Yes to 154 No. The resolution in its original form was still before the house.

The Rev. Daniel Brettell offered his two minutes to speak to Mr. Parks, which Bishop deForest initially said could not be accommodated but that Pastor Brettell could speak for himself, to which Pastor Brettell said that he simply wanted to allow Mr. Parks to complete his comments in that he considered those comments to be important. Mr. Parks was then invited to speak again; he talked about a friend who raised the issue of risks to counselors because of the laws in certain states; Mr. Parks' concern was whether these risks could be faced by pastors and social service agencies in the church.

The Rev. Terrence Walsh then moved the previous question, which was seconded by Mary Schwartz. Pastor Shankweiler raised the issue of what would then be voted upon in that the recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel was simply that this resolution be considered by the assembly, which it was, not that it be adopted or denied. The vote was then taken on the previous question, which was adopted by a vote of 236 Yes to 23 No.

After some discussion by Pastors Shankweiler and Dietz with Bishop deForest concerning what Pastor Drennan and Ben Miller intended, Pastor Drennen, seconded by Ben Miller, moved that the recommendation from the Committee on Reference and Counsel be adopted, i.e., that the committee recommended "that the resolution be considered by the assembly." The vote was 188 Yes to 63 No.

The floor was then open to consider the basic resolution from Mr. Parks and Pastor Poole. Deacon Michael Krentz then moved to substitute the original resolution for the recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel. Pastor Shankweiler objected that the recommendation by the committee was already approved and that, therefore, the motion should simply be to approve the original Parks-Poole resolution. Deacon Krentz agreed with that proposal, and his revised motion to approve the original Parks-Poole resolution was seconded by the Rev. Rebecca Knox.

Warner and Jimmy Jones spoke in favor of the resolution and urged consideration of how a comprehensive general liability policy that protects professional exposure could be affected if a kind of counseling becomes illegal. Pastor Shankweiler then moved the previous question on all matters before the house, which was seconded by Pastor Brandon Heavner. That motion was adopted by a vote of 234 Yes to 15 No. The vote on the Parks-Poole resolution was then taken, and the resolution was adopted by a vote of 223 Yes to 29 No.

Bishop deForest said that the assembly will end at 3:00 p.m. as called for in the agenda and that any unfinished business will be referred to the Synod Council. He added that the contract for the voting equipment ends as well at 3:00 p.m., and so voting beyond that time would be impossible. Pastor Brandon Heavner thanked those who submitted resolutions and those who took part in the debate. He also made the point that the resolutions not considered by the assembly will be considered by the Synod Council and encouraged the persons with concerns to raise them with members of the Synod Council or Vice President Edelman-Weiner.

INSTALLATION OF THE DEANS AND SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS. Bishop deForest introduced Pastor Dietz, who conducted the installation of the synod's deans and Synod Council members. She also reported that the assembly's offering for world hunger was \$855.45. The newly elected dean was the Rev. Thomas Lang of the East Berks Mission District; reelected deans were the Rev. Dody Siegfried of the Northern Lehigh Valley Mission District and the Rev. Nelson Quiñones of the Lehigh Mission District. Concerning the Synod Council, she mentioned the two members reelected by the assembly on nomination by their mission districts: Andrew Hottenstein of the Hazleton-Lehigh Mission District and the Rev. Chris Druckenmiller of the Pocono Mission District. Six other persons were newly elected to the

Synod Council: Stephen Hikes, Richard DeLuca, Dr. Helen Davis, the Rev. Rashion Santiago, Deacon Linda Zawaski, and the Rev. Maritza Torres Dolich.

THANK YOUS. Bishop deForest then thanked the persons involved in leading the assembly, including the Rev. Kimberly Vaughn, the members of the Events Staging group, the Assembly Planning Team, Amy Mietelski and the other members of the Synod Council Program Committee such as Daniel Tobey and the Rev. Spencer Steele, Pastor Brandon Heavner, the Rev. Kenneth Melber, Pastor Lauren Applegate and Stacey Burke for the Growing Young segments, Daniel Raudenbusch, the worship team headed by the Revs. Deborah Taylor and Chris Druckenmiller, Bobby Siegfried, Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner and the members of the Synod Council, the mission district deans, the office staff (Debbie Skinner, Laurie Christman, Stacey Burke in that capacity), his associates, the executive staff, Pastor Dietz, and the Rev. Michael Bennethum. Pastor Dietz spoke of vitality training through the ELCA, which is now possible online.

Ms. Edelman-Weiner spoke of the July meeting of the Synod Council as the time when the unfinished business concerning the Reference and Counsel resolutions would be addressed and invited persons with concern about those matters to contact her so that she could convey those concerns to the council. "Please do not feel that you are being cut off from the process."

Bishop deForest spoke of the work going on as we are stronger together in Christ. "We are ready to close this assembly but not close the work." The Order for the Close of the Assembly was then used. The next assembly was announced for June 1-3, 2023, at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions.

A final recorded worship segment was shown.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl D. Shankweiler, Secretary

APPENDIX

RESOLUTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL THAT WERE FORWARDED TO THE SYNOD COUNCIL FOR ACTION

1. A RESOLUTION CONCERNING ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION EMPHASIS

The following resolution was submitted by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Racial Justice Team:

The Rev. Dr. D. Michael Bennethum, Director for Evangelical Mission, NEPA Synod
Kaitlyn Olson Blend, Bear Creek Camp
The Rev. Colleen Cox, Grace, Shillington
The Rev. Samantha Drennan, Grace, Macungie
Deaconess Deborah Graf, Trinity, Reading
The Rev. Jennifer Hall, St. John's, Nazareth
The Rev. Brandon Heavner, St. Mark's, Bethlehem
The Rev. Suzanne Trump, St. John's Windish, Bethlehem

Date of submission: Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

Whereas, Paul reminded the people of God in his letter to the churches of Galatia that 'in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:26-28); and

Whereas, The church is the Body of Christ, and when one member of the Body hurts, we all hurt (1 Corinthians 12:26); and

Whereas, The 1993 ELCA social statement 'Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture' states: 'Racism—a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice—is sin, a violation of God's intention for humanity. The resulting racial, ethnic, or cultural barriers deny the truth that all people are God's creatures and, therefore, persons of dignity. Racism fractures and fragments both church and society'; and

Whereas, Systemic and institutionalized racism is a cancer infecting North American culture; and a Pew research study published in July 2015 shows the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the whitest religious group in the United States, and the congregations that make up the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod are primarily White; and

Whereas, The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted to require all rostered leaders to undergo

anti-racism training as regularly as boundary training; and

Whereas, The 2019 Churchwide Assembly issued the 'Apology to Persons of African Descent';

and

Whereas, The ELCA Church Council has issued the 'Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People'; and

Whereas, The ELCA has provided anti-racism training for the ELCA Church Council, bishops, and churchwide staff; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA establish a requirement for Racial Justice/Anti-Racism training for rostered ministers, Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers, and full communion partners serving ELCA congregations in the NEPA Synod at least every three years; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of the Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, in partnership with the Racial Justice Team, will offer at least one racial justice/anti-racism training workshop every two to three years at the same cost or less to participants as Boundary Training; and be it further

Resolved, That the Racial Justice Team, in partnership with Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), will continue its own ongoing education in anti-racism being aware of updates

in curricula in order to keep the training current, will commit to engaging BIPOC colleagues to

bring an awareness of injustices, and will encourage and offer opportunities for the bishop's staff, the leadership of each congregation, including rostered and lay, to set aside a time each year to reflect on how racism, implicit bias, and privilege impact the church's life and mission.

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel regarding this resolution was as follows: "The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the proposed resolution 'Concerning Anti-Racism Education Emphasis' be adopted by this assembly."

2. PARTICIPATION OF THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST.

The following resolution was submitted by the Rev. Carl D. Shankweiler, Pastor of Zion, Frackville, and Trinity Chapel, Buck Run.

Date of submission: Thursday, May 26, 2022.

Whereas, The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod's main predecessor from 1748 to 1962, the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States, relied on volunteers for most of its history to carry out synodical ministries, not having its 'first salaried president'¹ until 1917, by which time the Ministerium had 579 congregations; and

Whereas, Large synod staffs of paid, full-time professionals came into being only in the decades following World War II, a time of unique and dramatic increase in financial support for religious organizations, so that President Wilson E. Touhsaent could write in his annual report in

1971, 'We are proud that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod has been a pioneer in the regional use of staff' (that is, assigning staff members to serve the 'congregations and pastors'

of 'specific districts'), which was a new development made possible by the synod's having seven full-time professional staff members of its own plus three additional full-time staff members assigned to the synod by churchwide units of the Lutheran Church in America;² and

Whereas, This synod's regular purchasing power has diminished greatly since the late 1960s and early 1970s to the point that today the synod's purchasing power is only 16.8% of what it was in 1971,³ a decline that has made our continuing to have a large, paid staff impossible; and

Whereas, Even when the synod had a larger staff, numerous persons both lay and ordained served as volunteers and continued to add strength and leadership to the synod's various ministries; and

Whereas, Because the ordained leaders and congregations of this synod can no longer expect a paid synod staff to carry out all of the tasks and activities once performed by the staff and need

to consider the voluntary involvement of ordained leaders and lay members alike to be increasingly essential in the carrying out of synodical ministries; therefore be it

Resolved, That all congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod served by Ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or Ministers of Word and Service should not only allow, but also encourage and expect that those leaders will be involved in significant ways in the ministries of their local mission districts and/or the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and/or the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America so that the life of the synod truly is a participatory reality of Gaining Strength and not seen as a spectator sport."

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Council regarding this resolution

was as follows:

“The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the proposed resolution ‘Concerning Participation of the Whole Body of Christ’ be commended to this assembly, citing

the charges extended to all rostered ministers of the ELCA in their Letter of Call, the ELCA’s Model Constitution for Congregations (2019) [*C9.03. and *C9.23.], the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Constitution (Bylaw 12.01.d.), and the baptismal vows of the entire body of Christ.

“From Letter of Call to Ordained Ministers of the ELCA:

‘We call you to exercise among us the ministry of Word and [Sacrament/Service] which God has established and which the Holy Spirit empowers...to impart knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its wider ministry; to endeavor to increase support

given by our congregation to the work of our whole church; to equip us for service; and guide us

in proclaiming God’s love through word and deed.’

“From the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations (2019):

‘Chapter *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments;
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 4) provide pastoral care;
- 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.

b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;

- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline;
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the church-wide organization and of the (insert name of synod); and
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.'

"From the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations (2019):

'Chapter* C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.'

"From the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Constitution, Bylaw 12.01.d.

'BLS12.01.d. Each Mission District shall have an Assembly, which shall meet at least annually.

'l) The Mission District Assembly shall consist of all rostered ministers under call to congregations and the same number and category of lay representatives as each congregation has to the Synod Assembly. The executive of each Church-affiliated institution or agency on the District territory shall designate two representatives to the Mission District Assembly, one of whom shall be a layperson. The status of "official visitor" shall be given to rostered ministers living on the territory of the Mission District, who are either retired or are engaged in extra-parish service. The Mission District Assembly shall also consist of those persons of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who serve a congregation on the Mission District territory.

'2) The Mission District Assembly shall elect a dean from among the rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Mission District, a secretary, and such other persons as may be assigned by this synod's constitution and bylaws. They shall serve terms of three years, and shall serve no more than two terms consecutively.'

"From 'Holy Baptism,' 'Evangelical Lutheran Worship,' (p. 231),

'We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world'

[emphasis added].'"

1 John A. W. Haas, President, "Report of the President," Minutes of the Proceedings of the 169th Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States (1916): page 20. In referring to the forthcoming selection of the Ministerium's first salaried president, President Haas is looking ahead to 1917 and adds about this new officer, "with whose advent a new era ought to be begun in the life of our Ministerium!"

2 Wilson E. Touhsaent, President, "Report of the President," Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention and Special 1970 Convention of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (1971): page 20. Having "the regional use of staff" was so new a concept that President Touhsaent notes that "at least three other synods have begun a similar approach in the past year."

3 The 1971 Mission Support equivalent was \$1,658,008, which adjusted for inflation would be \$11,093,097 in 2021 dollars. In 2021 our Mission Support was actually \$1,860,637, which is 16.8% of that 1971 adjusted amount.

3. A RESOLUTION CONCERNING COVID MITIGATION

The following resolution was submitted by

The Rev. Rebecca Knox, Zion (Spies), Reading (Alsace Twp.), Salem, Shalters, Fleetwood;
Parttime Chaplain at Reading Hospital

SALM Doug Didyoung, St. Mark's Lutheran, Reading

The Rev. Tom Irwin, Advent Lutheran, West Lawn

The Rev. Beverly K Wenrich, Pastor, St James Lutheran Church, Geigertown

The Rev. Carol Kehler, Pastor, St. Paul's and Nativity Lutheran Churches, Reading

The Rev. Rob Argot, Holy Spirit Lutheran, Reading

The Rev. Sonja Ware, St. John's German, Reading

The Rev. Michael Ware, Robeson, Mohnton

A note was added: "For suggested mitigation phases email Pastor Rebecca Knox at Rev-Knox7@gmail.com."

Date of submission: Thursday, May 26, 2022.

Whereas, All of our public buildings are required to follow fire codes, with smoke detectors and extinguishers; and

Whereas, Like a fire COVID also spreads rapidly with significant potential for destruction of: life, mental health, and economic well-being; and

Whereas, Jesus commanded us to love one another; therefore be it

Resolved, That all the congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod live-out this Christian love by implementing and communicating on-going COVID policies based upon current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data¹; and be it further

Resolved, That these implemented COVID policies dynamically increase and decrease mitigation as threat levels increase & decrease respectively—such as requiring properly worn, effective masking and reducing activities that increase air-borne contagion risks (singing, close

unmasked prolonged gatherings, indoor eating); and be it further

Resolved, That they will know we are Christians by our love.

[The recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Council regarding this resolution was as follows: "The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the proposed resolution](#)

'Concerning COVID Mitigation' be referred to Synod Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod for their consideration."

¹ Such data may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html> and <https://covidactnow.org/>

4. A RESOLUTION CONCERNING GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

The following resolution was submitted by Scherelene Schatz, Christ Lutheran Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania. Not arriving in time for automatic consideration by the assembly, the assembly agreed to deal with this resolution, though there was not enough time to do so.

Resolved, That each mission district dean write a letter on behalf of his/her mission district

membership to the senator representing them in Washington requesting them to cooperate in bipartisan talks on gun control regulations."

5. A RESOLUTION CONCERNING AFFIRMING THE ENVIRONMENT

The following resolution was submitted by
The Rev. Paul Metzloff, Pastor of Reformation, Reiffton
The Rev. Inge Williams, Pastor of Friedens, Shartlesville
The Rev. Robert Argot, Pastor of Holy Spirit, Reading
The Rev. Wayne Moritz, Pastor of Holy Spirit, Emmaus
Kristen Edelman-Weiner, Vice President, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Susan Reier, member of Saint Paul's, Orwigsburg
The Rev. Carl Shankweiler, Pastor of Zion, Frackville, and Trinity Chapel, Buck Run.

Date of submission: Wednesday May 25, 2022.

A resolution concerning A Just Transition to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030

Whereas, Our faith commands us to love 'your neighbors as yourselves' (see Luke 10:27); and

Whereas, 'Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth'¹; and

Whereas, We acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples, whose ancestors originally cared for the land that feeds us, make up less than 5% of the global population and protect over 80% of the biodiversity² that sustains us all; and

Whereas, 'The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples; the protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust'³; and

Whereas, The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that in order to avoid catastrophic consequences of climate change, global warming needs to be limited to 1.5 degrees; and

Whereas, The planet has already warmed 1.1 degree since pre-industrial times, causing record-smashing wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, ocean acidification, and species loss⁴; and

Whereas, Climate change is already leading to the destruction and displacement of people's homes, food sources, and well-being (leading to at least 30.7 million climate displaced persons in 2020 according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC])⁵; and

Whereas, Indigenous, Black, People of Color, and communities impacted by poverty have contributed the least to climate change and are the most impacted by it;⁶ and

Whereas, The United States has contributed more greenhouse gas to the atmosphere historically than any other country⁷; and

Whereas, We have a realistic chance of meeting the goal of not exceeding 1.5 degrees of warming if the United States reaches at least a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and equitable net zero emissions by 2050⁸; and

Whereas, To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030 the United States will need a World War II sized mobilization that includes government investment, public-private partnerships, binding emission reduction targets, and possibly a carbon fee and dividend; and

Whereas, A just transition from a fossil-fuel based economy will lead to better health,⁹ family-sustaining jobs,¹⁰ clean air and water for communities historically left behind, and a safer, more sustainable future for our children and future generations; therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that the ELCA churchwide continues

to call upon the leadership of the United States of America to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources

by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

Resolved, That ELCA churchwide will continue to equip and encourage congregations, synods, and associated ministries to advocate that the United States of America reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

Resolved, That churchwide encourages congregations and synods to advocate for a just transition away from greenhouse gasses, with emphasis on supporting projects that directly benefit Indigenous, Black, People of Color, and communities impacted by poverty that bear a

disproportionate cost of pollution and climate change already; and be it further

Resolved, That the ELCA Churchwide will support these actions through investments in staff, education, tools and resources that equip congregations and synods to accomplish this

goal and leverage knowledge, skills, and experience across the church; and be it further

Resolved, That congregants and rostered leaders be encouraged to further educate themselves to the urgency of the climate emergency both locally and globally as well as to the local and global opportunities a just transition will create; and be it further

Resolved, That rostered leaders and bishops will be encouraged to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency through their preaching, teaching, and congregational action as often as possible; and be it further

Resolved, That the synod and ELCA churchwide will encourage and cooperate with Lutheran, ecumenical, faith-based, and secular organizations that share our commitment to the protection and restoration of the natural world while doing justice for all.¹¹

The recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Council regarding this resolution was as follows: "The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the proposed memorial concerning 'A Just Transition to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030' be commended to this Assembly for its consideration."

1 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice

2 <https://www.wri.org/insights/numbers-indigenous-and-community-land-rights> and <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biodiversitys-greatest-protectors-need-protection/>

3 Earth Charter (adopted at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly), full text which was endorsed can be found at: <https://earthcharter.org/>

4 IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

5 <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

6 <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> There

7 <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change>

8 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/cut-global-emissions-76-percent-every-year-next-decademeet-15degc>

9 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cop24-special-report-health-climate-change>

10 <https://newclimateeconomy.report/>

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE NETWORK

In 2022, Reverend Mary K. Owens, R.N. established a Parish Nursing Taskforce, comprised of nine registered nurses, working within their congregations as Faith Community Nurses, in health and wellness endeavors, or interested in becoming Faith Community Nurses. The members of the Taskforce included Dean Black, R.N., Holy Spirit, Emmaus, Nancy Hess, R.N., Friedens Lutheran Church, Oley, Gail Ide, R.N., Saint Paul, Dallas, Debra Obeid, R.N., Saint Paul Kresgeville, Tammy Oswald, R.N., Frieden's Lutheran Church, Oley, Enid Rank, R.N., Christ Lutheran Church in Hellertown, and Peggy Saylor, R.N., Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Breinigsville. In addition to the nurses noted above, Cindy Zimmerman, who coordinated the NEPA Synod's Parish Nurses program for many years, served as a mentor as we journeyed from a Taskforce to a Network of Nurses, along with Jackie Wolf, a long-time registered nurse in our Synod.

Reverend Mary Owens, R.N., Pastor of Saint Matthew United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Scranton, serves as the voluntary coordinator of what is now known as the NEPA Synod Faith Community Nurse Network, formally referred to as the NEPA Synod Parish Nursing Network.

Highlights of our work for the 2022-2023 year include Enid Rank's making a presentation to the congregation of Saint Paul Craigs Meadow featuring an overview of the history of Faith Community Nursing, and Dean Black, Gail Ide and Enid Rank, who participated in the Synod's Learning Ministry Day, sharing information about Faith Community Nursing, the educational process for becoming a Faith Community Nurse, and for pastors, the benefits of having a parish nursing program to promote a congregations spiritual wholeness, and reach out in practical ways to be a healing presence in the community.

One very positive development has been the inclusion of our nurses is the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association, formerly known as the Evangelical Lutheran Parish Nurse Association, which is a nationwide network of registered nurses from all Lutheran denominations, practicing as Faith Community Nurses, or interested in doing so. As Faith Community Nurses, serving in the NEPA Synod, we belong to the Region 7 and 8 peer group, which meets monthly by Zoom, and offers nurses spiritual and professional support, access to a wide array of professional resources and continuing education opportunities.

The Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association identifies a Parish Faith Community Nurse as "one who is an Integrator of Faith and Health, reminding people to care for the body, mind and spirit." The Association identifies some of the roles of a Parish/Faith Community Nurse to include health education in all formats from individual to group, to encourage the understanding of the connection between faith and well-being and the needs of the community. In this role, the Faith Community nurse may serve many roles, such as coordinating care, to promoting wellness, recruiting and training volunteers, providing information and assistance with community health resources and support, and collaborating with the pastor and other congregational leaders to provide faith education, encourage congregational worship and giving, and provide comfort and support to members through visitation and providing Holy Communion to homebound or hospitalized church members.

For more information about the Lutheran Faith Community visit www.lutheranfcna.org or contact lutheranfcna@gmail.com.

Enid Rank, FCN, BSN, RN , serving as Faith Community Nurse, at Christ Hellertown became a Board of Director member, representing Region 7 for the Lutheran Faith Community Association. Part of Enid's role includes attending monthly meetings during which policies, procedures, business, and educational opportunities for the national organization is discussed and voted on. Enid serves as a liaison for any Faith Community Nurse or prospective Faith Community Nurse in Region 7 of the ELCA, seeking to promote the practice of Faith Community Nursing within congregations, and welcomes the opportunity to network with any Region 7 congregational leader or registered nurse interested in learning more about the benefits of Faith Community Nursing.

For more information about membership in the NEPA Synod Faith Community Nurse Network, and information about becoming a Faith Community Nurse, or starting a Faith Community Nurse program in a congregation, please contact Reverend Mary Owens at maryowens903@yahoo.com.

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