



Walking Together for a Cause: Celebrating 50 Years of ELCA World Hunger

On Saturday, June 22, 18 faithful folk gathered at Conrad Weiser High School stadium in Robesonia, PA, to walk the track as part of a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of ELCA World Hunger. In spite of the high temperatures, a lot of miles were walked and cycled to earn support dollars to feed hungry people. We had representatives from Grace, Shillington, Trinity, Wernersville, Zion, Spies, Zion, Womelsdorf, Grace, Macungie, Trinity,



Robesonia, New Life, New Tripoli as well as Pastor Rachael Dietz and Deacon Travis Woodfield from the Northeastern PA Synod office, and Quentin Bernhard from Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa), who updated us on local legislation and advocacy needs as our state budget is crafted. We will have to await totals from the synod office to determine how much we raised, but it was a blessing to be together with a community of compassionate, caring people to contribute to the work of the ELCA



to see that All Are Fed. The Hunger Ministries in the early planning stages for a choir festival, tentatively for May 2025 as part of the 50th anniversary celebration

Submitted by: Rev. Eileen Smith LeVan Co-Convener of the Hunger Taskforce

SoulShop-Part of a New Ministry to Celebrate 75 years

Submitted by Pastor Paul Metzloff

Reformation Lutheran Church in Reiffton is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. As a part of that celebration, our planning committee wanted to begin a new ministry, in light of the facts that we have always worked towards being active and engaged, and also that several of our active ministries ended during and shortly after the COVID pandemic. In our conversations, we realized that many of the families in our congregation had, in some way, been affected by suicide – far more than we would have guessed. Therefore, we decided to begin a ministry focused on mental health and, in particular, suicide prevention and education.

We chose, as our first major initiative, to provide a one-day faith-based suicide education program called SoulShop. With funding from our congregation, a generous Witness and Service grant from the synod, and additional financial and advertising support from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (the group that often organizes the Out of the Darkness Walks), we sponsored this training on May 4th of 2024. Attended by representatives of the congregation, other local congregations, health care professionals, and members of the community, this training was an opportunity to learn more about the stigma surrounding

suicide, how to help those who might be contemplating taking their own lives, and faith-oriented ways for openly discussing this often neglected or avoided subject.

Our trainer from SoulShop was himself a survivor of suicide, and guided the conversation appropriately and empathetically. Several of those who attended were themselves touched by suicide, including a family who had lost a son and brother to suicide. The group read scripture together, prayed together, ate together, and practiced

open conversation about mental health in general and suicide in particular. We left with information and resources from both SoulShop and the AFSP, as well as encouragement and

inspiration.

If you or your congregation would be interested in hearing more details about the SoulShop training, feel free to contact us at Reformation at 610-779-0534 or mail@reformationlutheran.org. Also, feel free to go directly to the SoulShop website at soulshopmovement.org. Much helpful information can also be found at the AFSP website at afsp.org/chapter/eastern-pennsylvania



[Click here to view photos of the event.](#) You can find information at godslove.org about the grants available from the Witness and Service Team. Your mission support giving makes these grants possible.

Thank you for your continued support!