



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Building Connections, Strengthening Mission: The Impact of Staff Development

Since 2021, when I joined the synod staff, I have felt a deep passion and dedication for the work God is calling me to do. Over the past three years, the relationships I have built, both with synod staff and throughout the synod regions and beyond, have been some of the strongest of my career. I have been a Lutheran all my life, raised in a church and family of faith. So, when the job opened at the synod office, applying felt like a natural choice.



My time on synod staff has shaped my spiritual journey, revealing how God's presence is truly in everyone, including me, in both joyful and challenging times. I often find myself asking, "What is God calling us to do?" "What is God calling *me* to do?" It's funny how sometimes God's answers are loud and clear, while other times, there seems to be silence, much like a parent stepping back to let a child solve a puzzle or get dressed all on their own.

However, God is not silent in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. God is actively working through all of us to move mountains and embody the change Jesus modeled for us. The synod staff have been focusing more intentionally on communication and staff development. Over the past year, the full synod staff, including building staff and the Associates of the Bishop, have gathered for retreats to strengthen our communication. One of these retreats also included the Synod Council, the redesign team, and other key stakeholders around the synod, providing a space for collaboration. Pastor Doug Hill from Abiding Hope in Littleton, Colorado, has helped facilitate some of these retreats, incorporating insights from the Gaining Strength cohorts. Through this work, staff have explored their enneagram numbers, gaining a deeper understanding of how our personalities intertwine and complement one another.

Pastor Rachael Dietz, Associate to the Bishop, comments on the retreat by saying, "*Intentional investment*



in staff help us grow into the disciples God would have us be. We're not static blobs; we're human beings with hearts, hands, feet, and brains. When we practice and learn, we become more aligned and attuned to the Spirit's work in us and the synod. Your mission support then gets turned inside out as we support the mission of congregations: to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, to all."

This investment in staff development is not just about strengthening our internal team, it is about equipping us to better serve the entire synod. As we grow in communication, collaboration, and leadership, we become more responsive to the needs of the congregations, more effective in our ministries, and more connected as a community of faith. By modeling teamwork and intentional growth, we hope to inspire congregations and leaders to do the same in their own contexts. Ultimately, this work is about aligning ourselves more fully with God's call, ensuring that together, as one synod, we continue to move mountains and embody the change Christ has set before us.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Trinity Lutheran Church in Lehighton and St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown for hosting staff retreats. Your hospitality is deeply appreciated and truly a blessing.

Submitted by: Stacey Burke (she/her) Communications & Growing Young Coordinator

DID YOU KNOW that your Mission Support helps fund areas of the synod like this one and many other important initiatives? Your contributions are making a significant impact and helping others grow in faith, supporting the synod's lanes of Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life, along with the directions of loving like Jesus, healing like Jesus, and engaging like Jesus. To learn more, visit godslove.org/missionsupport.

Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church
Stroudsburg, PA



2025
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May

30-31

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