



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Listening, Healing, and Engaging Through Podcast Ministry



Mission Support makes it possible for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to support creative ministries that reach people in new ways and respond to real needs in our communities. One recent example is a podcast project developed by Pastor Kim Truebenbach called *Condemned Happy*, supported through a Witness & Service Grant.

The project began with conversations between Pastor Kim and young adults who were wrestling with difficult experiences related to faith and religious communities. Many of these individuals carried deep questions or painful memories connected to their spiritual upbringing. Recognizing a need for compassionate listening and honest conversation, Pastor Kim began exploring how a podcast could create space for people to share their stories and reflect on faith, healing, and hope.

Through recorded conversations and storytelling, the podcast offered listeners a place where experiences could be shared without judgment. Rather than providing quick answers or trying to “fix” complex situations, the project focused on something deeply pastoral: listening. In doing so, it embodied the synod’s commitment to love, heal, and engage like Jesus, offering a reminder that sometimes the most faithful response we can offer one another is presence, understanding, and compassion.

The project also reflects several of the synod’s ministry lanes. By engaging conversations that resonate with younger generations who often encounter faith discussions online, the podcast reflects the synod’s commitment to Growing Young, meeting people where they are and listening to the questions and experiences shaping their lives today. Using accessible digital tools and online platforms, the ministry also demonstrates Gaining Strength, experimenting with new forms of communication that allow the church to connect with people beyond traditional settings.

At the same time, the project reflects the spirit of Going Beyond Death to Life, walking alongside individuals who have experienced spiritual hurt or who feel disconnected from church communities. By creating space for reflection and conversation, the podcast invites listeners to rediscover hope, trust, and the possibility of healing in their relationship with faith.

Technology made it possible for the conversations to reach a wide audience. Episodes were recorded through simple online tools and shared across podcast platforms and YouTube, places where many younger adults already spend time learning and engaging with ideas. According to podcast analytics, the episodes were downloaded more than 260 times, with listeners across the United States and internationally, demonstrating how digital ministry can connect people in unexpected ways.

While the podcast created an online space for conversation, its impact was also personal and relational. Pastor Kim noted that several young adults in her extended family began reaching out more frequently for conversation and support, knowing they would be met with openness and compassion. These relationships became opportunities for deeper listening and pastoral care, strengthening trust and connection in meaningful ways.

For Pastor Kim, the work became a reminder that faith is often lived out through small but significant acts of presence. Listening carefully, honoring someone's story, and creating space for honest conversation can become powerful expressions of God's love at work in the world.

Projects like this are made possible through Mission Support, which allows the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to encourage creative ministry, support leaders exploring new ways of sharing the Gospel, and walk alongside people seeking healing, hope, and community. Through ministries like this podcast, we continue to live out our calling to love, heal, and engage like Jesus, trusting that even simple conversations can open doors to deeper understanding and renewed faith. Those interested in exploring the conversations can find the *Condemned Happy* podcast on YouTube, where the episodes remain available to listen and share.

DID YOU KNOW that your Mission Support helps fund areas of the synod and ELCA 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.



June 4-6, 2026

Split Rock Resort • Lake Harmony, PA
Registration Opens: April 7
Registration Closes: May 11

39th NEPA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Grounded in Ephesians 3:14–21, the 2026 Synod Assembly theme **IMAGINE** invites us to trust the God who can do far more than we can ask or imagine. As we gather in June, the synod will also prayerfully discern and elect a bishop for the next six-year term.

How You Can Help

Synod Assembly voting will be conducted by paper ballot this year, and volunteers are needed to help distribute and count ballots. To learn more or volunteer, visit the Assembly webpage.

godslove.org/assembly2026

THE REV.
CeCee Mills
ELCA Representative

