



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

We Are Stronger When We Serve Together

Submitted by Stacey Burke, NEPA Synod Director of Communications

When a fire forced St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown out of its building during Lent, neighboring congregations stepped in to help. Members of St. John's and Christ Lutheran in Allentown worshiped together, shared leadership, and supported one another through the challenge.

Reflecting on the experience during the 6261 Ministry Communities panel, Deacon Michael Krenz shared, "We have a sense of joy and we know that if we have trials and tribulations, the other congregations will say, 'Can I help?'"

Throughout the 2026 Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly, one theme surfaced again and again. Whether discussing ministry communities, new worshiping communities, global partnerships, or emerging ministries, participants shared a common message: we are stronger when we serve together. Mission Support helps create and strengthen those connections.

At assembly, participants heard stories from 6261 Ministry Communities, where congregations are exploring new ways to share leadership, resources, and ministry. Panelists spoke honestly about both the challenges and joys of collaboration. While the work requires patience, communication, and trust, many shared how relationships formed through these partnerships have strengthened congregations and expanded their ability to serve their communities.

The assembly theme, *Imagine*, was reflected in stories shared during the Fresh Expressions panel. Participants heard about ministries reaching people through community meals, recovery ministries, young adult gatherings, video game nights, mobile shower ministries, and other creative efforts designed to meet people where they are. Together, these ministries demonstrate how God is at work beyond traditional church walls. Speaking during the panel, April Mulvey of Hope's Table in Reading shared, "I serve a big God. So I dream big and I believe that God will just make it happen." Her words captured the spirit of ministries that are willing to try new things, build new relationships, and trust God to open new opportunities for sharing the gospel.





The assembly also celebrated the growth of the Indonesian Lutheran Church of Scranton, which was authorized as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) in 2025. Worshiping in both Indonesian and English and building relationships with neighboring congregations, this ministry is a visible reminder that the church continues to grow in new and life-giving ways.

Beyond Northeastern Pennsylvania, assembly attendees were reminded that we are part of a much larger church. Through companion synod relationships in Tanzania, Saxony, Argentina and Uruguay, Slovenia, and our domestic partnership with the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, congregations are connected to a global community of faith. These relationships allow us to learn from one another, pray for one another, and discover new ways God is at work throughout the world.

As Bishop Christopher deForest reflected, "We're coming together not just to survive. We're coming together not just to thrive, but we're coming together to do mission of God in the world." Through relationships with congregations, ministry partners, companion synods, pastors, deacons, licensed lay ministers, and church leaders, we are continually discovering new opportunities to participate in God's mission.

Assembly also highlighted how Mission Support helps leverage additional resources for ministry. Through partnerships with the ELCA, seminaries, and grant programs, congregations and ministry leaders have received support for new worshiping communities, outreach ministries, leadership development, Fresh Expressions training, and collaborative ministry initiatives.

Following her election as bishop, Bishop-Elect Jennifer Dee reflected on her excitement for how God is calling the NEPA Synod to serve together, sharing that she is "incredibly excited to see how God calls us to do ministry together." Her words echoed what had already been demonstrated throughout the assembly: ministry is not something we do alone.



Every congregation that shares Mission Support is helping make these ministries possible. Together, through Mission Support, we are not simply sustaining ministry. We are strengthening congregations, raising up leaders, forming new ministries, and joining God's mission in the world. If you would like to learn more about the ministries and stories shared at assembly, recordings of the plenary sessions are available on the synod's YouTube channel, with links and assembly resources available at godslove.org/assembly2026. Together, we are imagining what God can do next.



Help Make Ministry Possible

Through Mission Support, congregations share resources, support leaders, and expand ministry. Thank you for helping strengthen congregations, support leaders, and launch new ministries. Learn more about Mission Support and how your congregation can support at godslove.org/missionsupport.