

USSARK

News of God's People in Action



February
2017

God's work. Our hands. + Upper Susquehanna Synod + Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



GROW in the Snow participants perform a skit on Friday night during the synod's youth retreat.

Synod Youth Retreat to Learn More About Faith Practices

This year's synod youth retreat, GROW in the Snow, was held on February 10-11, 2017, at Mount Luther. Nearly 85 youth and their adult leaders attended, looking at "Our Way of Life." The theme was based on Matthew 5: 13-16, and explored faith practices and living a Christian life.

Those in attendance participated in an opening "campfire" program, complete with bag skits and songs, following a time of ice breakers. Bishop Barbara J. Collins led the group in a contemplative worship the first night, enlisting the campers to help with various parts of the worship service. On Saturday, four rotating stations were done. Those included Bible study, worship planning, a service project, and a craft. For the service project, campers learned about water use and for the craft, each person made mini drawings of themselves and pasted them on a cut out of a body to remind them that together we are the Body of Christ.

Following lunch, the campers had the opportunity to play in the snow, which fell on the Thursday before the retreat. Worship, which was planned during one of the rotating stations, concluded the event. The name "GROW in the Snow" comes from the camp's Bible Study method where campers Gather and Reflect On the Word.

Evergreen Center Debt Paid Off Nearly Two and A Half Years Early!

The Camp Mount Luther Corporation Board of Directors received good news at their January retreat when Chad Hershberger, executive director of the camp, announced to the board that the debt on the camp's dining hall and activities building, the Evergreen Center, has been retired. Through the support of some generous alumni staff donors at the end of 2016, the camp raised enough money to pay off the debt on that building project, over two and a half years ahead of schedule. The camp is planning to schedule a mortgage burning celebration later this year.

The board was meeting in retreat to work on a visioning process with the camp's development consultant, Dave Brunkow of Gronlund, Sayther, Brunkow (GSB). Brunkow led the board through a process to determine opportunities, challenges, and future directions for the camp. In the coming months, members of the board will be talking with several constituent groups to get input on some of the ideas presented at the retreat. The board's discussions and the constituent input will help the board as they look to new programs and facilities in the next five years.

In addition to the retreat discussions and the debt announcement, the quarterly meeting of the board was also held. The 2017 Budget was formally adopted and reports were heard from committees. The board, made up of eleven members, will meet again in April.

**FREE VBS
Curriculum
for ELCA
Congregations**
*New Outdoor Ministry
Curriculum Also Available*



Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) produces the curriculum each year that is used in camp and retreat settings and for Vacation Bible Schools and day camps. This year, LOM is offering their 2016 VBS Bundle of "The Jesus Way" free to ELCA congregations.

To repeat: Special for this year only, the VBS Bundle of the 2016 LOM Curriculum "The Jesus Way" is FREE for all ELCA congregations—yes, free! Each year the LOM curriculum provides a quality alternative for VBS curriculum at an affordable price. The bundle includes Bible study activities, crafts, and games for preschool children, and upper and lower elementary aged youth. Also included are planning documents, including Biblical and theme background information. To order the curriculum, visit www.lomnetwork.org.

LOM has also released its 2017 curriculum entitled "The Water of Life." Three Christian education basics—God's creation, Christian community, and faith formation—come together in "The Water of Life." Participants will dive into five Bible stories and daily themes that shower them with new awareness of how water and life are gifts from God. The curriculum will also give participants an opportunity to reflect on baptism, the sacrament that overflows with meaning about being cleansed, invited into a faith community, and led to do God's mission in the world.

Included in the full curriculum package are five-day Bible study sessions for Preschool, Upper and Lower Elementary, Junior High, Senior High, and Adult, as well as games, crafts, worship resources, environmental activities, and team-building activities. "The Water of Life" is also available in other small bundles designed for Youth Ministry and VBS settings.

"The Water of Life" is available for purchase and download on the LOM website at www.lomnetwork.org. LOM is an association of outdoor ministry organizations dedicated to encouraging, equipping, educating, and empowering bold and faithful outdoor ministry leaders for service in the Church and in the world.

Up and Down the Valleys

Members of synod groups, Mission Interpreters, Stewardship Committee, Mission Table, Transformational Ministry Team, and Small Church Mission Committee met in January to talk about future directions.

Assistant to the Bishop Craig Miller convened the group as they looked at ways to function in the coming months and years, including "tables" to gather around for mission conversation. About 15 people attended the meeting.



United In Christ, West Milton (*Interim Pastor Faron Johnson*), is known for their ham and bean soup they sell at the Milton Harvest Festival each year. This fall, they were able to raise \$1,068 for the Snyder-Union-Northumberland Habitat for Humanity. Mark Rabuck, who coordinates the soup sale for the church, presented a check to Carrie Decker, board member for Habitat, and Sandy Hawkins, Habitat Director.

You can help tell the stories of our ministries within the synod. We welcome your submissions for USS Ark. If you have a ministry that you'd like to be featured, please send information to news@uss-elca.org. Pictures are welcomed but please get permission of those pictured before you send it to us. Thank you for your partnership and for reading USS Ark!

CLERGY NOTES: *Rev. David Byerly has been appointed to a term call of four years, with the possibility of a fifth year, as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran, Williamsport; St. Matthew Lutheran, Williamsport; and St. Michael's Lutheran, Cogan Station. Rev. Chris Milarch has accepted a half-time call at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in State College, a new North American Lutheran Church congregation, and he has left the roster of the ELCA. Rev. James West is now the intentional interim pastor at St. Mark's, Williamsport.*

USS ARK is a publication of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA. Permission is granted for congregations to reproduce this newsletter. Send mission stories and ministry ideas by the first of the month to Chad Hershberger, Director of Communications, at news@uss-elca.org.



**Upper Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

The Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Bishop

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Upper Susquehanna Synod Events Calendar

Help the Lutheran Church in Liberia

Does your congregation have paraments or vestments in good shape that you no longer use. How about communion ware? If you have items like that and would like to donate it to the Lutheran Church in Liberia, please bring it to the Synod Office by March 10. Bishop Emertius Main will be collecting those items and giving them to Moses Goba, who will be visiting Liberia this spring.

Reminder: Get Your Forms Turned into Synod and ELCA Office

For pastors: It's that time of year to complete several forms for the synod office to report on the year that just passed and the new year. Please submit names of new or continuing congregational leaders to USS on "Congregational Leaders Form." And, confidential reports to the bishop are now due, too, as is the Statement of Intent if it was not turned in yet. E-mail completed reports to BpCollins@uss-elca.org. Parochial reports for 2016 to the ELCA were due on February 15.

February 18, 2017: Reinsburrow Fundraiser

A pork and sauerkraut fundraising dinner to benefit the Reinsburrow and Wagner families will be held on Saturday, February 18, 2017, at Messiah, South Williamsport. The dinner will be from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and be served family style. Cost is \$9.00 for adults; \$4.00 for children under the age of 12. Takeouts are also available. Tickets are available at the door or in advance by calling 570-326-9171. Advance ticket purchases are encouraged.

February 26, 2017: Mount Luther Sunday

The Upper Susquehanna Synod Council has designated that Transfiguration Sunday each year be recognized as "Mount Luther Sunday" to help promote outdoor ministries in the synod. Members of USS congregations are encouraged to celebrate outdoor ministries on this day, February 26, 2017. Mount Luther is an extension of the ministry that is done in local Lutheran congregations. The camp asks that congregations promote the camp on that Sunday or designate another Sunday this spring to do so. Ways to promote the camp include bulletin inserts to share with congregation members, Temple Talks, camper testimonials, bulletin board displays, special camp music during Sunday school and church services, as well as special offering being collected. Ideas are available here:

<http://www.campmountluther.org/event/mount-luther-sunday/>

February 27, 2017: Alice Pope Shade Lecture at Susquehanna University

CNN political analyst David Gregory will present the 2017 Alice Pope Shade Lecture on February 27, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in Degenstein Center Theater on the campus of Susquehanna University. Based on his critically acclaimed memoir of the same name, *How's Your Faith? An Unlikely Spiritual Journey* will explore Gregory's attempts to deepen his faith amid the rough-and-tumble world of broadcast news. The event is free and open to the public; no tickets are required. Best known for his nearly 20 years at NBC News, Gregory served for six years as the moderator of *Meet the Press* and as chief White House correspondent during the presidency of George W. Bush. He traveled with President Bush on 9/11 and during his first visit to Ground Zero after the attacks. From the White House, David covered the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and earned a reputation as the toughest questioner in the press corps. As a correspondent, Gregory covered the trials of O.J. Simpson and Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, as well as other breaking news around the country. He contributed anchoring duties to all of the network's major programs, including *TODAY* and *NBC Nightly News*, and served as a political analyst. The annual Shade lecture is made possible by the Alice Pope Shade Fund, established in 1983 by her daughter, Rebecca Shade '54 Mignot, to bring nationally and internationally renowned religious scholars and leaders to campus. Sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies and the Office of the Chaplain, the lectures explore the role religion plays in various aspects of public life and in the formation of individual character.

March 8-9, 2017: Camp Mount Luther is Helped by Raise the Region

Camp Mount Luther is participating in "Raise the Region" on March 8-9, 2017. The event, coordinated by The First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania, helps the community support local nonprofit organizations' fund raising efforts. FCFP, in partnership with Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships, will be launching the 30-hour fundraising event on March 8 and 9, 2017, starting at 6:00 p.m. on March 8 and ending at 11:59 p.m. on March 9. Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships has donated \$150,000 that will be used to stretch a portion of donations made to pre-registered nonprofits. Additional monetary prizes and incentives will be awarded throughout the entire event. This program is designed to help organizations, like Camp Mount Luther, kickoff our 2017 fundraising campaigns and increase donor bases. Proceeds from this event will go to the camp's Annual Fund, unless a donor gets in touch with the camp office to designate it for another camp cause. How It Works:

1. On March 8 and 9, donors will visit www.raisetheregion.org from a computer, smart phone, iPad, etc. to learn more about the nonprofits participating and how their work is impacting our community.
2. You can then make an online donation to support one or more of those nonprofit organizations on the Raise the Region website. Running totals will be shown throughout the day at the Raise the Region website.
3. At the end of the donation period, a pro-rated match per gift will be determined and the Community Foundation will send checks to all participating nonprofits with the amount raised, the pro-rated match, and any EXTRA money from prizes awarded throughout the day.

Camp Mount Luther has participated in Raise the Region for four years and has garnered about \$50,000 in donations during this event. The camp hopes you will help us to have another successful year!

March 12, 2017: Re-Creation in Mifflin County

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Reedsville will host the musical group, Re-Creation on March 12, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at their church. Re-Creation is a group of dynamic young people who present both religious and family oriented music. Re-Creation was founded in 1976 and since that time has appeared in churches of all denominations in all 50 states. The Re-Creation sacred program is structured with a sensitive presentation of an enduring faith in the Christian message. The group's remarkable blending of voices and dynamic presentation contribute to a unique and memorable worship experience. There is no admission charge, but a free-will offering will be received.

March 22, 2017: Norma Wood Lecture

Wednesday, March 22, 2017, at 5:30 p.m., Mary J. Streufert will present "Fire, Rape, and Moral Authority: Rape Law and Lutheran Theology" in the Gettysburg Seminary Chapel. It will be preceded by afternoon workshops on "Structural Sexism and Patriarchy" and "Language and Imagery of God." The 2017 Norma Wood Lecture and workshops are free and open to the public. Mary J. Streufert serves as Director for Justice for Women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Publications include *Transformative Lutheran Theologies: Feminist, Womanist, and Mujerista Perspectives*, ed. (Fortress Press, 2010) and articles, chapters, and encyclopedia entries on Lutheran and feminist theology. She contributes to gender-related social policy and teaching development in the ELCA and serves as the North American regional coordinator of the Lutheran World Federation Women in Church and Society program. From 2010 to 2016, Streufert served on the Schleiermacher Group steering committee of the American Academy of Religion, and from 2010 to 2013, she co-chaired the National Council of Churches Justice for Women Working Group. Streufert earned a doctorate in theology from Claremont Graduate University, an interdisciplinary master's degree from Oregon State University, and a bachelor's degree from Valparaiso University. The Norma Wood lecture is an occasional offering of Gettysburg Seminary, in honor of the Dean Emerita, Norma Schweitzer Wood, on topics exploring social justice. For more information contact Chelle Huth, Director of Lifelong Learning at chuth@Ltsq.edu.

March 24-26, 2017: Marriage Encounter Weekend

When is the last time the two of you did something to enrich and revitalize your marriage? Make 2017 the year you resolve to take time to spend a weekend learning how to make your marriage a more intimate, loving, Christian union. Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends run from Friday night at 8:00 p.m. to Sunday around 3:00 p.m. and have been enriching marriages for over 40 years! There is a \$100 per couple registration fee; plus, toward the end of the weekend, you will be given an opportunity to make a

confidential contribution toward continuation of the program. Two nights lodging, 5 meals for each of you, and all supplies are included.

The 2017 Northeast US Weekends are:

- **March 24-26, 2017** at Toftrees Golf Resort Conference Center -- a peaceful resort nestled in 1500 wooded acres in State College, PA.
- **April 28-30, 2017** in Lancaster, PA, at the all newly-renovated Heritage Hotel Lancaster, home of the unique tree-house-inspired restaurant, "Loxley's."
- **September 15-17, 2017** at Spruce Lake Retreat Center, Canadensis, PA, a new hotel-style facility on Spruce Lake in the heart of the Pocono Mountains – an hour north of Allentown.
- **October 6-8, 2017** at the Black Swan Inn in Lee, Massachusetts. Nestled in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, a hidden gem overlooking Laurel Lake – an hour north of Hartford, CT.

To sign up online, go to: www.Godlovesmarriage.org and pay the \$100 registration fee using your credit card, or mark the option to mail in a check. For questions, or if you would like a brochure mailed to you, contact Northeast US Directors of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, Fred & Julie Schamber, at 724-325-3166 or email: fjschamber@comcast.net. Registrations are limited, so act today to ensure that you can attend the Weekend of your choice!

April 5, 2017: Institute for Lifelong Learning Program

Susquehanna University's Institute for Lifelong Learning is a series of programs designed for senior community members. Members gather in SU's Campus Center on Wednesday to enjoy a social hour, presentation, and lunch, beginning at 10:15 a.m. There are three options for membership in the institute. For further details, please contact Joe Herb at kapajoe@ptd.net or 570-374-9911 or Jayme Long at longj@susqu.edu or 570-372-4354.

April 5 Program: Dr. Philip Mackowiak, author of *Diagnosing Giants*; Professor and Vice Chairman of the Department of Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine: "Beethoven and the Sound That Failed."

April 11, 2017: Chrism Mass

The annual Chrism Mass with Renewal of Ministry Vows will take place on the Tuesday of Holy Week, April 11, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. It will be held at Trinity, Hughesville. Lunch will be provided after the service. Please reserve your place for lunch by contacting the synod office. Pastors, Diaconal Ministers, Associates in Ministry, and Authorized Lay Worship Leaders are especially invited to renew vows and recommit to worship leadership. The service will include the blessing oil and everyone is welcome.

April 23, 2017: Camp Mount Luther Spring Open House

Have you ever wanted to see Mount Luther's site and facilities? Do you miss camp and want to visit in the springtime? Are you interested in coming to camp this summer but want to get more information and see the place first? Well, this is your chance. The Camp Mount Luther Spring Open House will be held on Sunday, April 23, 2017, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. You can ask questions, tour camp, and see what it's like to be a camper! First time campers who are not yet registered for the summer and who attend the event can get a \$25 discount on their summer registration! To download a flyer for the event, click here: <http://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-Spring-Open-House-Flyer.pdf>.

April 24-28, 2017: Gettysburg Seminary Spring Academy

The year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation calls for a new examination of the church's mission and task in the world. This Spring Academy, under the theme "Re-Formation is Local" brings the question home to each believer and congregation. What is our mission and task in this world, right here? Our "Re-formation" is in our own hands; we have what we need right here and now to follow God's call to us in this place. The week will offer everything from biblical vision to practical work sessions on the neighbor and what the Gospel means to those nearby sojourners. Preaching Perspectives, a Croquet Tournament, and great food and fellowship are also part of the week. Check this page often: www.ltsa.edu/springacademy

as schedule, registration and presenters' details are soon posted. Wednesday evening worship will recognize the years of the seminary being LTSG with Michael Cooper-White preaching.

April 29, 2017: Food Packaging Event

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Williamsport, will be hosting a meal packaging project on Saturday, April 29, from 10:00 a.m. – noon or possibly longer. Their goal is to package 20,000 pasta and tomato basil meals that will be donated to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and area food pantries. These highly nutritious soy-fortified meals have a shelf life of two years and cost 25 cents each to produce. Their goal is to raise \$5,000. If they raise more, then they can package additional meals. The counties the northern Central Pennsylvania Food Bank serves are counties of high food insecurity. The term food insecurity means children come home from school with little or no food in the house. One in four children in Clinton County are food insecure. Lycoming County is slightly better. While we cannot solve all the causes of hunger, packaging a meal and giving something nutritious to a family is a physical act to serve our neighbor. The Outreach committee of St. Mark's Lutheran invites you to participate. They will need volunteers on Saturday, April 29. Please contact the following for more information.

Michele Owen, 570-323-4619, mowen@stmarkswilliamsport.org, St. Marks Youth & Family Ministry
Becky Miller Pryor, 570-971-4585, murphy173@verizon.net, St. Marks Outreach Chairperson

Donations to cover the meals can be made out to St. Mark's Lutheran or "Outreach, Inc." and given to either Michele or Becky or mail to St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 142 Market Street, Williamsport PA 17701.

May 3-5, 2017: Bishop's Retreat

Mark your calendar now – The annual bishop's retreat will be held on May 3-5 at Camp Hebron, Halifax PA. The focus of the retreat will be: *Relationship with God. Relationship with each other. Relationship with the world.* Cost for the two and a half days, meals included, is \$115/person for double occupancy and \$225/person for single occupancy. Space is limited. Registration and more information will be mailed next week.

May 22, 2017: LAMPA Lutheran Day

The rancor of this year's campaign season has uncovered divisions that will not disappear by swearing-in day. It is critical that our voice, as the people of God, be heard. At a time of such great need, how do we model mutual respect and attend to the issues confronting us and our neighbors near and far? Marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we consider how the Holy Spirit is re-forming us as the Word of God continues to change and renew the world. *How can we be Church Together, for the sake of the world, in Pennsylvania?* Lutheran Day is Monday, May 22, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill. Registration opens in early 2017. Bring a friend – or a team – and join Lutheran advocates from across the Commonwealth for a day of worship, learning and inspiration to ground and deepen your call to faith-rooted advocacy. The keynote speaker will be Cynthia Moe-Lobeda.

May 8, 2017: Bishop's Open Golf Classic

The annual Bishop Open's Golf Classic is set for May 8, 2017, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at the Susquehanna Valley Country Club in Shamokin Dam. The tournament benefits Camp Mount Luther and the camp's annual fund. A flyer/bulletin insert containing information and registration form is available here: <http://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-Golf-Tournament-Flyer.pdf>. The camp's golf tournament committee is currently looking for hole sponsors, door prize sponsors, silent auction items, and golfers. If you can help, please contact the camp office at 570-922-1587 or cml@campmountluther.org. Congregations are also encouraged to become hole sponsors. Get involved and help our synod's outdoor ministry!

June 16-17, 2017: Synod Assembly

The 2017 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly will take place at Weber Chapel on the campus of Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, on June 16-17, 2017. Guest speakers and musicians from the FICA's Global Mission Team will be with us including Sunitha Mortha as our FICA

Churchwide representative. More information will be provided as it becomes available and will be posted at <http://www.uss-elca.org/our-synod/synodassembly>. Remember, we are striving to go paperless this year with the bulletin of reports so materials will be available for download from the website listed here.