

CURRENTS

Upper Susquehanna Synod News and Information

January 5, 2010

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ATTACHMENTS:

- Parish Nurse 2010 Training Brochure

CURRENTS is the e-newsletter of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Please share this information with others! Edit, copy, and use this information in bulletins, newsletters, sermons, billboards, press releases, evangelism efforts, and/or spoken announcements where helpful. If you have information to include in future editions, please send an email to <news@uss-elca.org> with your name, congregation name, town, and the information.

The next edition of Currents is planned for February 5, 2010, with a publication deadline of February 1, 2010.

NEWS IN THIS ISSUE

Lutheran Bishops Offer Ideas to White House to Stir Economy

In a December 16 letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, a caucus of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) bishops acknowledged economic challenges and suggested opportunities for job creation. One of those bishops was Upper Susquehanna Synod Bishop Robert L. Driesen.

The group met with Martha Coven, special assistant to the president for mobility and opportunity policy, to present the letter and discuss the status of hunger and economic insecurity in the United States. In the letter the bishops wrote, "We see firsthand the effects that unemployment has on individuals, families, and communities. While we are there to counsel and comfort, we are also committed to encouraging policies that can spur job growth." The bishops' letter outlined a number of propositions for job creation such as small business development, job retraining, green jobs for low-income people and expanding public service programs. The caucus asked for particular consideration of sustainable development for low-income communities, as well as sustaining the environment and people living in poverty through investments in green jobs and clean energy technology.

The bishops also visited with members of Congress on December 16-17. During their time there, the bishops received legislative updates from the ELCA Washington Office and others on health care reform, job creation and child nutrition reauthorization, and attended a "United We Stand: Feed a Neighbor" event hosted by the ELCA Washington Office. Bishop Robert L. Driesen of the Upper Susquehanna Synod was one of seven bishops who participated in the event. The bishops' letter is at <http://bit.ly/5Tlwx3> on the ELCA Web site.

Synod Publications' Deadlines Changed

Beginning with the start of the new year, the three nearly monthly publications sent from the synod will have new deadlines. *Currents* will be published on the 5th of the month, with the 1st being the publication deadline. *USS Ark* will be published on the 15th of the month, with the 10th being the publication deadline. *Headwaters* will be published on the 25th of the month, with the 20th being the publication deadline. Combined issues of *Headwaters* will be done for June/July (published on July 15 with a July 10 deadline) and December/January (published on January 15 with a January 10 deadline). Questions can be addressed to Chad Hershberger, Director of Communications, at news@uss-elca.org.

Helping Congregations Plan for Mission

Is your council or a group of leaders within your congregation looking to focus on your congregation's vision for mission or possibilities for ministry? Hoping to review the ministries your congregation has done in the past, and decide what to retain, what to let go of, and what new directions to pursue? Think it would be a good idea to seek God's transforming power, re-connect with your community, or better understand how people perceive the ministry that happens through your congregation? Then the Upper Susquehanna Synod has a number of resources available to assist you, with the help of both synod staff, and committed laity and clergy volunteers from throughout the synod's congregations, who enjoy living their discipleship as coaches or retreat leaders. To discuss what might be the best fit for your congregation, please be in touch with Pastor Karl-John Stone, Assistant to the Bishop (karljohn@uss-elca.org), or Ms. Beth Yenchko, Director for Evangelical Mission (Eyenchko@uss-elca.org), or call them at the synod office (570) 524-9778.

Network Director Sought

Family Promise, a national faith-based non-profit organization providing shelter and assistance to homeless families, is seeking a Network Director to develop and operate its operations in Lycoming County. The successful candidate will coordinate with local churches, schools, and social service agencies to help clients meet immediate and longer-term needs and maintain their family unit. B.A. degree required, M.S.W. preferred. Send resume to Family Promise, c/o CCPC, 807 W 4th St., Williamsport, PA 17701.

Lutheran Church History Contest for Youth

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic (LHSMA) invites middle school and high school youth to participate in a MULTIMEDIA PROJECT contest. You are asked to prepare a 15-20 minute DVD or Power Point presentation with an

accompanying script titled "My Congregation's Story" or "My Congregation's Youth Ministry Story." Three winners will be awarded in both the Middle School (6-8th grade) category and the High School (9-12th) category. The first place winner receives \$125 for the winner in each category plus the opportunity to present projects at the LHSMA Spring Program on April 20, 2010, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The second place winner receives \$75 and the third place winner receives \$50. Submissions are due by March 15, 2010. Please mail completed work along with an application form (available at <http://www.lhsmidatlantic.org>) to: LHSMA, 61 Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, PA, 17325. Questions can be directed to the Reverend Stephen Herr, LHSMA president, at pastor@christgettysburg.org or 717-334-5212

UPCOMING EVENTS

FLOOD S.U.: Sunday, January 10, 2010

Calling all youth in 6th through 12th grades for the annual FLOOD S.U. at the Fieldhouse at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove from 3:45 - 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 10, 2010. This year's event will feature a musical performance by Praise Band Junior from First Lutheran in Mifflinburg, and a "Project Linus" blanket making relay race service project, as well as all the fun of swimming, basketball, volleyball, racquetball, Rock Band and Guitar Hero, socializing, and all the snacks you can eat--all in the middle of winter! Cost is \$5 per youth if registered by January 4th, or \$10 at the door. Adult chaperones are admitted free. See the attached flier and registration form for more details.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: January 18-24, 2010

Each year, Christians worldwide observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, praying and working for greater unity and common witness among all followers of Jesus Christ, as we seek to be faithful to Christ's prayer that "all may be one." Among the events that are happening to commemorate this week are two annual ecumenical prayer services, to which you are invited. An Ecumenical Celebration of God's Word will be on Wednesday, January 20, 2010 at 10:30 a.m., in St. Peter's Cathedral, 300 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton, PA. The LARC Vespers Service will be on Sunday, January 24, 2010 at 5:00 p.m., in St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral, 221 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA. All are most welcome to attend.

Healing Service for Rostered Leaders and their Families: January 25, 2010

A Healing Service with Holy Communion will be held at the synod office in Lewisburg (500 Reitz Blvd.) on Monday, January 25 at 7:00 p.m. for rostered leaders and members of their families. The service is provided by the synod's Spirituality Taskforce and is open to all.

Alice Pope Shade Lecture with Charles Mathewes: January 28, 2010

Charles Mathewes will be the speaker for Susquehanna University's Alice Pope Shade Lecture on January 28, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. in Stretansky Concert Hall. The lecture this year is titled, "Faith, Irony and Power: Lessons for Liberal Education." Charles Mathewes is associate professor of religious studies and principal of Brown College at the University of Virginia. He is also editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Religion. His two most recent books, both published by Cambridge University Press, are *A Theology of Public Life* (2008) and *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition* (2001). He is co-author of *Prophecies of Godlessness: Predictions of America's Imminent Secularization from the Puritans to the Present Day* (Oxford 2008) and co-editor of *Having: Property and Possession in Religious and Social Life* (Eerdmans 2004). The lecture is free and open to the public.

Synod Winter Retreat for 6-12th Graders: February 12-13, 2010

The Synod Youth Council presents its annual winter retreat for 6-12th Graders. The theme this year is "Book of Faith Bonanza!" The Book of Faith Initiative is a grass-roots movement of the ELCA to encourage all Lutherans to open scripture and join the conversation. The retreat this year will seek to do the same in a fun, friendly format through many activities including worship, speakers, small group bible study, games, workshops, and other activities. The retreat will be held February 12-13, 2010 at Camp Mount Luther in Mifflinburg. Registration is \$40 and is due by February 5th. Look for a registration packet in the mail very soon or contact Rev. Patrick Sipes at sgtmuddy@gmail.com and he will send one as an attachment.

Agape Concert: February 27, 2010

Live concert featuring Agape (David Scherer) will be held on Saturday evening, February 27 at a to-be-determined site in the Upper Dauphin Conference, Lower Susquehanna Synod. There will be free admission to the concert, and there will be a free will offering that will be sent to World Hunger. Stay tuned for more information. Questions can be sent to Pastor Jan Mills at pastorjan@comcast.net.

Lutheran Disaster Relief Volunteer Trip: March 14-20, 2010

LDR - SEPA Volunteer Trip to Mission Starfish (former Camp Victor) in Ocean Springs, MS is scheduled for March 14 to March 20, 2010. All are welcome. Reservations have been made for this special week of rebuilding in the Gulf Coast. Four years after Hurricane Katrina the need for volunteers still exists. As funding dwindles and people forget about the storm, over 10,000 Mississippi homes remain to be repaired or rebuilt. Adopt-A-Family is the newest component of Mission Starfish. There is also an Adopt-A-Home ministry in Ocean Springs to assist families not in the system and receiving no help from any organization. If your group receives donations, you might want to use them towards funding rebuilding projects. LDR is happy to provide volunteer training and will provide registration forms for this trip. Church groups and/or individuals are encouraged to register. For more information, or to register, please contact: Linda Frey at lwfrey@epix.net or at 610-847-5775

Lutheran Marriage Encounter: March 19-21, 2010

The Western PA Lutheran Marriage Encounter has scheduled a Marriage Encounter Weekend for March 19-21, 2010, at the Toftrees Golf Resort and Conference Center in State College. Marriage Encounter Weekends are designed to strengthen and revitalize ALL MARRIAGES and run from 8 p.m. on Friday night until around 5 p.m. on Sunday. Couples overwhelmingly report that they fell in love with their spouse all over again. All costs for 2 nights lodging, 5 meals and all supplies are covered by a \$45.00 per couple registration fee plus a confidential contribution of whatever amount you choose that you are given the opportunity to make at the end of the weekend. Registrations are limited, and all Western PA Weekends had waiting lists last year, so make your reservation now to avoid disappointment. The other 2 Western PA Weekends for 2010 will be April 30-May 2 at The Riverside Inn (20 miles south of Erie) and October 22-24 at the Radisson in Sharon, PA (an hour north of Pittsburgh). For further information or to sign up for a Weekend, go to www.GodLovesMarriage.org or contact Western PA Lutheran Marriage Encounter Directors, Fred & Julie Schamber at fjschamber@comcast.net or 724-325-3166. Please give each other the best gift of all--yourselves!

Bishop's Day for Confirmands: March 21, 2010

A special event for the synod's confirmands will be held on Sunday, March 21, 2010, from 2:00- 4:30 p.m. at United Lutheran Church in Sunbury (Wolf's Crossroads). This event is open to ALL confirmation students, and will be held in the future every other year. Pastors are encouraged to attend along with their students and the students' parents. Make the most of the car-ride by engaging your youth in faith talk! Individual invitations to confirmands will NOT be mailed this year, so pastors and catechists, please encourage your confirmands' participation. The event includes worship and teaching by Bishop Driesen about what it means to belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Publicity materials for this event will be distributed to pastors in late January.

Holy Tuesday Chrism Mass: March 30, 2010

The annual Holy Tuesday Chrism Mass service for leaders (rostered and lay) in the Upper Susquehanna Synod will be held on Tuesday, March 30 at 10:30 AM at **Christ Lutheran Church, Lewisburg**. Bishop Robert L. Driesen will preside at this Eucharist service which includes the blessing of oil for use in anointing. RSVP to the synod office (secretary@uss-elca.org or 570-524-9778) to reserve a spot for lunch following the service.

"Gathering in the East" Youth Leaders' Conference: April 16-18, 2010

Attention Youth Ministers! It's here. The time has finally come. It's the annual youth retreat, the spaghetti dinner fundraiser, the parent's Bible study, Youth Sunday, the budget meeting, the tough conversation with the youth advisor, the weekly Youth Group meeting, the late-night phone call from a young person in trouble. It's time for the ministry you've been called and gifted to do, and you're going to need the right tools. You grab your Bible, notebook, first aid kit, playground balls, and guitar, and it's time to go. We know you work hard to minister to the young people and the families in your midst, and that you need to be equipped for that work. That is what the Gathering in the East Youth Leaders Conference is all about. Get connected. Be equipped. Find encouragement. Registration starts at just \$150.00 and hotel rooms start at \$75.00. For details on speakers, musicians, and workshop topics and to get a registration discount go to <http://www.gatheringintheeast.org> or contact Robin Kunkel at (570) 374-8444.

MONTHLY FEATURES

(W)holy, (W)holy, (W)holy: Health, Healing and Wholeness Article for February 2010

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘This applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall begin to do duty in the service of the tent of meeting; and from the age of fifty years, they shall retire from the duty of the service and serve no more. They may assist their brothers in the tent of meeting in carrying out their duties’.” (Numbers 8:23-26a, NRSV)

One might assume that in the case of the Levites, forced retirement was meant to foster younger leadership; young men could begin to serve while still under the guidance of the temple elders. Or perhaps, it was due to the physical requirements of hauling the tabernacle and its furnishings through the wilderness. Regardless, God seemed to know that a healthy retirement requires some sort of advanced planning.

How well one adjusts to this new phase of life depends on a number of factors. Dr. George Valliant, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, likens it to being in 4th grade, as “cooperative play, helping others, having friends, and learning are all important. The problem is that by this age, we’ve forgotten how to play!” There may be much more than a grain of truth to his statement, because it appears that those who strongly identify with their occupation often have some difficulty adjusting to life without a time clock.

Taking time to cultivate a network of friends outside of work relationships can be immensely helpful in getting through the initial retirement adjustment phase. If you are one of those who used his/her job as an escape from family issues, this time may be particularly stressful. Spend time with your spouse, but don’t overwhelm them by expecting him/her to meet all your social needs because this is an adjustment for your spouse as well. You can meet friends for coffee, join a Bible study, organize a regular round of golf, and allow yourself to have fun! Is there an activity that you’ve always wanted to try, but never had the time? Engage the creative side of your brain - it can lead to re-discovery of who you are! Have you always had a desire to play the piano, or learn to paint? Do it now!

During retirement, physical activity is more important than ever. Consider participating in a formal fitness program such as golfing, dancing, swimming, or walking 20-30 minutes at least 3-5 times-a-week. Any and all of these will go a long way toward establishing or maintaining healthy behaviors. Strength training exercises [weights or resistance] several times a week have been recognized for their value in decreasing stress, improving balance, and increasing endurance and flexibility. Good dietary habits including limiting fats, sugar, and salt in conjunction with drinking at least 8 glasses of water per day and getting regular sleep all contribute to living a full and productive life.

Plan your time and set some personal goals. What do you want to accomplish on a typical day? It is human nature to waste time when you have lots of it! Get more involved in your community: volunteer at your local hospital, the local chapter of the Red Cross, or Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Help establish or maintain a community garden, spend time weekly at a soup kitchen, or deliver Meals-on-Wheels. Do you have a special gift or talent? Use it to teach others! Do you enjoy working with numbers/business? Help your fellow retirees with tax preparation or offer to serve as treasurer of a club or organization to which you belong. Help raise funds for a favorite charity or community group. Find out what it is that you enjoy doing, and do it!

Get to know yourself spiritually. Consider attending a guided retreat. Engage the services of a spiritual director. Study scripture. Sign up for seminary courses either locally or on-line. Explore a variety of prayer forms. Learn more about God as you simultaneously learn more about yourself.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow theorized that we progress through different phases of development as we age. For the healthy adult in later stages of life, one’s goal becomes reaching our full potential as an individual or self-actualization. This involves letting go of old routines to make way for the next phase of life. It involves continual learning. Retirement is a great adventure - time to take a fresh look - to reassess in body, mind and spirit. In the words of Robert Fulghum, “Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw some and paint and sing and dance and play and work everyday. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.” (Source: *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*) Blessings to you as you pursue this wonderful, new phase of life!

*Debbie Best, Program Coordinator
Diakon Family Life Services, Training & Consultation*

Nurse's Notes - Bulletin Blurbs for February 2010

February 7: At the start of this new year, here are some resolutions for you to make on behalf of your dog or cat!

1. **I will not fee my dog/cat table scraps.** The higher fat content of “people food” can lead to vomiting and diarrhea. To break the habit of “begging,” put him/her in another room when you are eating.
2. **When I say “No.” I mean “No.”** As with children, consistent consequences needed to curb bad behaviors, but remember to reward good behavior.
3. **I will take my pet for an annual checkup.** Pets develop chronic illnesses just as their owners do. Routine shots and blood-work are important to diagnosing and treating illnesses such as kidney failure, diabetes and hyper-thyroidism. (*Prevention*, January 2009, pg. 128)

February 14: Nine easy swaps that save loads of calories! To lose ½ to 1 pound a week, aim to cut 250-500 calories a day by making a few of these swaps:

Swap a bottle of water for 1 can regular soda	Save 100 cal.
Swap apple slices for small French fries	Save 270 cal.
Swap regular hamburger for Big Mac	Save 290 cal.
Swap ¾ c. high-fiber cereal for ½ c. granola	Save 110 cal.
Swap 1 tsp. mustard for 1 Tbsp. mayo	Save 100 cal.
Swap 2 slices whole grain bread for 1 lg. (4 ½”) bagel	Save 269 cal.
Swap 2 c. air-popped popcorn for 1 sm. bag(1 oz.)pretzels	Save 47 cal.
Swap 1 slice pizza + 1 ½ c. salad with 1 Tbs. low-fat dressing for 2 slices pizza	Save 229 cal.

(*Prevention Magazine*, January 2010, pg. 72)

February 21: Upset by conflicts with others? Learn to speak your needs or distress directly, avoiding “you always” or “you never” accusations. Instead, use statements such as: “I feel ____ when you ____.” If conflicts are a source of distress for you, consider taking a class to help you become more assertive.

February 28: Hungry for the taste of fresh fruit in mid-winter? Reach for freeze-dried over heat dried fruits. Freeze drying helps retain vitamins and minerals that are some-times lost during the heated drying process.

Safety Tips for Ministries from Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company for February 2010

Take an Employment Practices Refresher

Does your ministry have someone on staff that tracks employment-related paperwork and issues? Sound employment practices can help your ministry run smoothly and reduce the likelihood that an employment-related lawsuit will be filed. Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company has created a checklist that can help your ministry take a closer look at issues associated with employment practices. Some areas that the checklist delves into include:

- Knowledge of employment laws in your state
- Investment in thorough background checks for all employees
- Documentation of performance, annual reviews, and any disciplinary action taken for each employee

The employment practices checklist and other employment-related resources are available at <http://www.SafetyCentralOnline.com>, Brotherhood Mutual’s online library of free safety and risk management materials for ministries. Contact your insurance agent if you have specific questions regarding employment practices.

Mifflinburg Area 2010 Group Workcamp Volunteers Needed

First Lutheran Church in Mifflinburg will be hosting Workcamp in the Mifflinburg area this summer. They are in need of volunteers in the areas listed below. Here are some opportunities for churches to participate. Anyone who is interested can contact Kim Sawyer at kksawyer@dejazzd.com or (570) 966-1603 to sign up.

Site Writers (January, February, March)

Volunteers who are “construction savvy” will visit pre-selected sites to determine what repairs will be done to the homes, determine if the work fits the workcamp program (cost, skill, time), use workcamp forms, measure & list materials that are needed, and access any safety precautions. We will provide a 2-hour training the week of January 11th.

Hospitality

No construction experience necessary! All you need is a friendly smile, a caring heart and willingness to help make our 400-450 guests comfortable while in Mifflinburg. This committee is divided into sub-committees that are listed below. Feel free to sign up for one or many areas.

Adopt a Site - Andy Long, Chair

As soon as the word gets out that we are hosting a camp, locals start calling asking how they can help...they can “adopt a site” by delivering a cold watermelon one day, cookies another, pizza one day, or just encouraging the campers at that particular site. If they cannot work at the site due to liability issues, they can encourage and support! This committee would match sites with those who would like to do this!

Adopt a Youth Group - Pam Baker, Chair

Campers come from out of the area so they may want to order pizza for devotion time or a birthday cake for someone celebrating that week or just need something at the store but don't have a vehicle to make a trip to Wal-Mart or the Dollar Store, they would call their designee who would be their very own angel this week.

Adult Leader Happy Hour

We need to boost our adult leaders. They worked hard to get to camp, drove the kiddos, spent sleepless nights tending to their group. With awesome adults we get devoted teens! The adults have a mandatory meeting Sunday afternoon and again Tuesday afternoon. Perhaps some snacks and tea/lemonade would be nice to say “THANKS” to them as individuals who took vacation time to sleep on the floor with teens!

Banners

Individuals crafted banners for the 2005 camp and arranged with the borough crew to have them hung along Chestnut Street...these banners are “somewhere” and need to be found and arrangements made for another hanging!

Breakfast/Dinner Aides - Polly Horning, Chair

We hire the school cafeteria staff to prepare and serve the meals, once again they are kept so busy keeping up with 450+ campers...they are unable to get out into the cafeteria and pick up a piece of silverware that may have fallen on the floor or to wipe off a table so another group of campers can sit and eat. The cafeteria at the Intermediate School WILL NOT hold 450+ campers at one time, we need to make sure the tables are wiped off and ready to serve others as quickly as possible. The campers are responsible for clearing their own things but sometimes they will forget a milk carton or to wipe up a small spill on the table. This committee will organize a schedule and enlist local volunteers to be at the cafeteria for breakfast and dinners (remember Wednesday we are at the park and will not need help that evening)...a great way to interact with the campers and encourage and support them.

Custodial Support - Betty Hook, Chair

We pay for one custodian to work throughout the week...keeping the school maintained for a week with 450+ sleeping at the school is tough...we ask all campers to put their room trashcan outside the classroom door when they leave in the morning...this committee would walk around with a cart and empty the trashcans, put a new bag in them, make sure toilet paper and paper towels are filled and just serve as a backup to help the custodian.

Gift Bags - Sandy Padlo, Chair

Upon registration on Sunday, we want to give each camper a small bag as a welcome gift...it can have candy, a notepad (for care cards), a pen or pencil, hand sanitizer, chap stick, coupons for local establishments? We need volunteers to help sew these simple drawstring bags NOW!

Lunch Prep (in the morning) - Irene Henninger, Chair

Each crew (75 crews) will have one member who serves as the “Break maker”...this individual is responsible to eat their breakfast quickly and then retrieve their cooler and water jug and go to the “lunch line.” Here they will gather a loaf of bread, a bag of cold meat, condiments, chips or cookies, fruit, drink and then go to the outside area and fill their water jug with a bag of ice and water for the day, then drag or carry it all to their transportation. The lunch prep committee will enlist help from volunteers to help with this line each morning, making sure the bread doesn't go into

the cooler first and the drinks thrown on top of the bread! A volunteer can greet the break maker with a “Good Morning” and help them fill their cooler or jug and start their day in a good way!

Signs/Billboards

Imagine taking the exit on Rt. 80 or turning onto Rt. 45 and seeing a sign or a billboard saying “WELCOME WORKCAMPERS” or on Saturday when they leave the school they would see “THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DID.” This committee will contact businesses and arrange for messages on their billboards and make signs to post in rural areas!

Ladders

Ladders! Ladders! Ladders! We need volunteers to make sure we have ladders for every site. The lumber store will deliver most ladders and bring them back to the lumberyard. You need to get ladders loaned to us, inventory them and assign them as per need.

Follow Up Crew (Week following camp)

Despite all efforts to complete all projects, some just don’t get done and the campers need to return home. If you are willing to finish any of the projects after camp is over, WE WANT YOU! You can work at your leisure, no one to hassle you and all supplies are provided. Great for families too!

Directions (May & June)

Remember these campers are from out of the area, they won’t know what “turn left at 4 Bell Church means” so we need all directions checked/rechecked!