

USS ARK

News of God's People in Action



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

Mt. Luther Summer Highlights

Camp Mount Luther, the outdoor ministry site of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, recently ended their summer camping season. Around 586 participants took part in programs during the eight-week session. Here are some of the highlights:

- Bishop Robert L. Driesen installed the 17 summer staff during the Summer Camp Kickoff Brunch.
- 284 campers enjoyed on-site programs including Pedal, Pack and Paddle; Day Camp at Night, Family Camp, and SURE Wilderness Adventure. Theme weeks for Games, Bring Your Own Adventure, Mount Luther Heritage, and Scooby Doo were offered as well.
- The camp started a garden this summer, thanks to a grant from the USS World Hunger Committee. Campers helped tend the garden and food from the garden was used in food service.
- A weekly edition of the camp's Camel Tracks newspaper was published by campers.
- A new weekly schedule was introduced this summer, adding Wednesday Elective Afternoon, a new Opening Worship for the parents, a new Friday Sending, and a combined All-Camp campfire/worship on Thursday night.
- During the last week of resident camp, Mount Luther held a joint camping week with the Central Pennsylvania Diocese of the Episcopal Church (USA).
- As always, there were several Day Camps at local churches, led by Mount Luther staff. This year, 302 campers were able to experience camp through these off-site opportunities.
- The summer theme was "Keeping the Earth!" Throughout the week, campers were challenged to do better to take care of what God has given us. The daily themes were Keeping the Earth, Keeping the Covenant, Keeping Life Abundant, Keeping the Song Alive, and Keeping Creation.
- The camp said goodbye to our longtime food service manager, Carol Segraves, who retired at the end of the summer.
- Other summer highlights included adventurous hiking, swimming, polar bear Olympics, parking lot relay races, and our popular night owl camps.



Pedaling For a Purpose

On Saturday, September 11, 2010, Greg Berger (*St. Luke, Sunbury*), will be pedaling 100 miles in order to support the church's many ministries. He has planned his route to take him past as many church members' homes as possible. Church members and the public have been invited to join in FUNdraising by "carbo-loading" with Greg at a Spaghetti Dinner the night before his ride. On Saturday morning, Greg will be leaving St. Luke's parking lot at 9:00 a.m., following a brief prayer service beginning at 8:30 a.m. Bicycle enthusiasts are invited to join him for any portion of the ride. Greg's route is posted at the church for those interested. In anticipation of Greg's return to St. Luke's, a celebration will begin at 4:00, featuring food and entertainment.



The Rev. Joshua Reinsburrow (St. John, Mifflinville) addresses participants at the synod's Mission Visitor Training held late this spring. Visitors are now available to come to congregations to talk about mission in the synod. Contact the synod office for more details.

Social Ministry Spotlight

St. John, Northumberland, supports a number of outreach ministries such as Highway Clean Up, Camp Mount Luther, Rocky Point Indian Reservation, Liberian Missionary Bette McCrandall, and the Angel Tree. They also have a few unique ministries:

The first is a ministry begun several years ago at a restaurant to offer weekly meals for Northumberland residents that are free with just a donation box for those who wanted to give something to help defray costs. Several churches were part of this ministry in planning, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. Each church took one week a month. After several months, other churches dropped out and St. John's moved the meal to their fellowship Hall. So, once a month, the Social Ministry Committee offers a free meal to the community with such meals as spaghetti and meatballs, hot dog picnic, turkey dinner, and ham dinner. The congregation has been doing this ministry for 12+ years. The menus are set and two ladies come in early to begin the meal. There are others who come in from the congregation to set tables and serve. Following the meal, several people from the congregation help in the clean up. Several seniors who are alone attend this meal and it's a great fellowship time for them.

There is no need for reservations. Several regulars attend each month but the numbers vary depending on the month. The congregation supports this ministry through special offerings from parishioners, donations from the attendees, and donations from the community, including some restaurants. The Social Ministry committee sets up meal plans and help ahead of time. Many of the helpers have been part of this ministry since the beginning. The name of this dinner is "Bread of Life" and it is held the second Thursday of each month, except in January and February due to weather uncertainty.

The second outreach ministry is their annual outdoor Fall Festival in October. There is something for everyone including food, clowns, musical entertainment, and games such as sand art, pumpkin painting, and beanbag toss. All children win a prize when they play games. The highlight is a kid's fishing tournament held with a portable pond and real trout!

Just opening up your congregation's doors and welcoming the community to use your facilities is wonderful outreach. St. John's opens their building for a migrant worker health clinic in conjunction with Geisinger Medical Center four times a year as well as a blood bank two times a year. Should you have any questions about these ministries, please call 570-473-3770.

Sandy Grier, AIM, is the USS Social Ministry Project Coach. That program is funded by Diakon to help congregations discern what outreach ministries will work best with the gifts your congregation has and the needs of the community. If you would like to meet with Sandy, contact her at 570-220-5039 or sandygrier@comcast.net. There is no fee for this service.

Up and Down the Valleys

The Upper Susquehanna Synodical Women's Organization held their annual convention on July 24 at Camp Mount Luther. The theme was "Renew and Rejoice." Pastor Miriam Nicholson, of Elliotsburg, led worship. Pastor Erin Bovendam, of McAlisterville, led Bible study. The ELCA Representative was Vickie Murph from Columbus, OH. A mission ingathering offering was divided between the LOFA Chicken and Egg Project and Haiti Disaster Relief. The personal ingathering was items for severely injured which will be sent to Landstuhl, Germany. Speaking of the USSWO, October 3 is the date for this year's Women of the ELCA Blanket Sunday. Last year, 23 blankets were collected and sent with over \$16,000 in blankets or donations raised.



Rev. Craig Settlege, ELCA Director of Mission Support, visited various sites in the Upper Susquehanna Synod in May, also meeting with the Synod Council. Settlege talked mission as he visited Kathryn's Kloset in Shamokin Dam, Camp Mount Luther, and Hope's Haven (pictured above) at Christ's United Lutheran Church, Millmont.

News from Camp Mount Luther: Carol Segraves, longtime food service manager, retired at the end of this summer. Carol served for 20 summers in that position. A celebration of Carol's ministry is being planned for the fall and a cookbook featuring favorite Carol recipes and stories will be available from the camp in time for Christmas! June Bricker of McAlisterville will start as Mount Luther's new food service manager on October 1st.

Pastor News: Pastor Catrina Ciccone (*United in Christ, West Milton*) left her congregation this summer for Minnesota to pursue a PhD in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary. Pastor Collette Broady-Preiss (*intentional interim, St. John [Brick], Montgomery*) also moved to Minnesota in July. Pastor Eric Deibler (*St. Luke, Williamsport*) was elected at the West Branch Conference Assembly on May 2 to complete an unexpired term as Dean of the conference. Pastor Kenneth Longfield (*Evangelical, Reedsville*) retired August 1, 2010.

USS ARK is a publication of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA. Permission is granted to reproduce USS Ark for congregational communications. Send your mission stories and ministry ideas to Editor Chad Hershberger at news@uss-elca.org.



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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