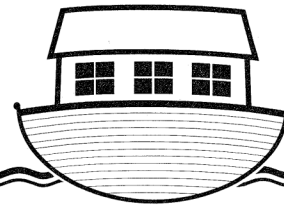


USS ARK

News of God's People in Action



Advent
Dec. 2009
(Edition 11)

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

A Christmas Message from our Bishop

“...and peace to his people...”



In the midst of war, as we continue to see the images of billowing clouds of smoke and listen to the massive explosions along roadsides and borne on the backs of suicidal terrorists, is it possible to still hear the echoing song of the angels at the birth of our Lord? “Glory to God in the highest” were the words they sang “and peace to his people on earth.” Of all the sounds that could be uttered, surely these are among those most pleasing to God.

Grant us peace, O God: peace in our families, peace between warring factions, and peace in our hearts. Protect those who place themselves at risk on our behalf, and bring to an end the conflicts that threaten the peace you seek for the world. May He who was born among us, the One who is called the Prince of Peace, continue his never-failing work to reconcile the world to you.

+ *Bishop Robert L. Driesen*

Synod Social Ministry Coach Available

On August 2, 2009, the Upper Susquehanna Synod received word from Pastor John Richter that Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries would award the synod a grant for \$20,000 in response to a grant proposal the synod submitted. The grant would be used to support the work and ministry of a synod Social Ministry Project Coach. The coach will be available as a resource person to congregations who identify an area of need in their communities, assisting them in the process of envisioning, structuring, and implementing a social ministry project to help address that need. The grant provides funds for the coach's compensation, work-related mileage and expenses, and start-up grant funds for congregational projects. Richter presented the grant to the synod council at their September meeting at Camp Mount Luther.

Ms. Sandra Grier, a rostered Associate in Ministry, has been called to serve the synod as the “Social Ministry Project Coach.” She already has been asked by some congregations to help social ministries do more outreach within their communities. Please see an example of this on page 2.

If you have an outreach ministry that you would like to share, please contact Sandy at sandygrier@comcast.net or 570-220-5039. Her goal is to help ministries grow and connect congregations doing similar ministries.

Social Ministry Spotlight: Daniel's Closet

Daniel's Closet is a clothing give-away for babies through adults. It is usually held the fourth Saturday of the month from 9:00-11:00 a.m. at Redeemer Lutheran, Washington Blvd., Williamsport. This ministry started with a homeless man and a young boy from the congregation. The adult wanted someplace to get warm. He was invited into the church, given a cup of coffee and some food. Afterwards, Daniel (the little boy) wanted to do more, so he talked to his grandmother, Barb Horn. Horn said, "He said to me, 'Nanna, we have to do something for people like this. We should have coats to give them,' and he went on and on. It was like the Holy Spirit grabbed him. It was all he could talk about." Daniel talked to Pastor Roy Meyer about his idea and thus a ministry began. It took about one year from that moment until they actually opened this ministry. Everyone had to get on board and details of this ministry had to be worked out.

Redeemer Lutheran has a storage room for donations. They do not have set hours for donations; however, most people call the church office and make arrangements for donation drop off. Donations come from a variety of outlets: individuals and other churches. Some congregational members go to yard sales and purchase clothing as well as offer to pick up any unsold clothing following the yard sale. Daniel's Closet only accepts items that are not stained, in good condition or as one volunteer put it, "If you wouldn't wear it yourself, then we don't accept it." Set up is usually on the Wednesday prior to the give-away. Clothing is placed in neat piles by sizes on tables for babies/children/youth and adults. About ten volunteers lead the charge each month between set up, tear down, helping individuals in selecting clothing if needed as well as always having coffee on for those who want it. Sometimes volunteers bring in cakes/donuts and share with the participants. Usually 200 people are served and anyone is eligible- no questions are asked. This ministry has gotten a few people in the doors on Sunday morning for Sunday School and worship - however, this is not why the congregation began this ministry. You are welcome to contact the coordinator of this ministry for more information and/or to make donations contact Barb Horn (HORN@lycoming.edu) or the church office at (570) 322-2333.

Church on the Air!

If you can't make it out Sunday morning, there are several congregations who broadcast their services on the radio:

- **Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lewisburg**, (*Pastor Bill Henderson*) broadcasts their service from the prior week on WMLP (AM 1380, Milton) each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
- **Bethany Lutheran Church, Montoursville**, (*Pastor J. Jeffrey Zetto*) broadcasts their service from the prior week on WRAK (AM 1400, Williamsport) the fourth Sunday of the month at 11:05 a.m.
- **Church of the Savior, Williamsport**, (*Pastor Ronald Shellhammer*) broadcasts their service on WRAK (AM 1400, Williamsport) the first Sunday of the Month at 11:05 a.m. and sometimes on the fifth Sunday of the month.
- **Port Royal Evangelical Lutheran Church, Port Royal**, (*Pastor Charles Hershberger*) broadcasts their service from the prior week on WJUN (AM 1220, Mifflintown) each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
- **Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove**, (*Chaplain Mark Radecke*) broadcasts their Weekly Chapel Service live on WQSU (FM 88.9, Selinsgrove) each Sunday classes are in session at 11:00 a.m. The broadcast is also live-streamed at www.wqsu.com

Up and Down the Valleys

This fall, 166 people participated in the **Northern Lights Lutheran Congregations** hayride held outside of Milton.

On Reformation Sunday, parishioners at **St. John, Richfield** (*Pastor Andrew Weaver*) used a new freestanding altar for the first time. It was made by **Pastor Erwin Roux** (*Zion, Turbotville*) who also made the altar at his previous call, **St. John, Mifflinville** (*Pastor Joshua Reinsburrow*).

A Roast Beef Family Banquet was held at **Trinity, Milton** (*Pastor Cheryl Berner*) on November 8. About 92 people were there to revive an old church tradition. **Pastor Andrew Weaver** (*St. John's Parish, Snyder County*) provided entertainment.

Grace Lutheran Church, Point Township (*Pastor Brian Beissel*) held their 4th Annual Night of Music on November 22. Thirteen musical acts performed in a benefit for Camp Mount Luther.

Pastor Ricky Phillips (*Mazeppa and Dry Valley*) will be the guest chaplain in the United States Senate on March 25. Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey nominated him.

Himmel, Rebuck, has called **Jane Compton** to serve as their next pastor, effective January 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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The Rev. Robert L. Driesen, Bishop

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