

HEADWATERS

News for Upper Susquehanna Synod Leaders

Nov. 25, 2009



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DEVOTIONAL

Each month, we'd like to share a devotional with you. If you'd like to submit a devotional, please send it to news@uss-elca.org. We will also be taking pastor's messages from their church newsletters to share here.

ADVENT

It may seem early to begin thinking about the church season of Advent, but then, our commercial world is already at Christmas. It has also come to my attention that in the past few years, there has been given much news attention to the holy times of the year of Ramadan and other sacred days of other faith systems, such as the Jewish holiday, Hanukkah, beginning in December. I hear on the news about the devout people and how they prepare for the festive celebration at the end of these times of preparation.

But, I have never heard any comment on the news stations regarding Christians celebrating the holy season of Advent. It seems that Advent has been compressed into the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas and forgotten because of commercial interest is the bottom line.

However, as Christians, we are called to remember the holy season of Advent. Advent is a period before Christmas. It is defined by four Sundays before Christmas, not always precisely four weeks. During this time, Christians are called to prepare for the coming of our God in the Incarnation. For the first two Sundays, we hear scripture about the second coming of Christ. That is just totally absent from the commercialism that seems to define what Christians believe and expect from these days leading up to Christmas. But, this is what we believe in our faith in Christ that he will come again. And this is the time to reflect on our lives, to be introspective, to be spiritually aware and to prepare for his coming. The two weeks before Christmas call our attention to the time before the birth of Christ as a baby. This too is a time to remember why the Incarnation of our God is so important to us, and to prepare the way for the Lord.

There are always grumbles and inquiries (from parishioners) as to why we are not singing about the birth of Christ all during the month of December when these beloved carols are heard in Wal-Mart and on the radio and wherever. But, this is a sacred time for us, a time of preparation. Perhaps in our culture and society it is more expedient to get to the celebration, but our God calls us to repentance, to search the heart, to prepare for the Lord's coming, and in proper time, to celebrate. If other faith based systems can be respected for their preparatory time for high holy days, why not Christians? Perhaps it must begin with the Christians looking at the meaning of the season.

*Pastor Lois Martin
Beaver Lutheran, Beaver Springs*



MILESTONES

Himmel, Rebeck, has called Jane Compton to serve as their next pastor, effective January 1, 2010. Ms. Compton is expected to be ordained in the United Church of Christ in January 2010. Blessings!

Grace, Berwick (Pastor Chad Hebrink), will celebrate worship for the first time in their renovated sanctuary on Sunday, December 6 with a special service of dedication. Congratulations!

The Rev. Janice Moody was installed at the East Kishacoquillas Parish as pastor on Sunday, November 22, 2009, 4:00 PM, at St. Paul, Milroy. She was ordained at Trinity, Danville, on October 7th.

Sympathy is extended to Pastor Gary W. Owens (retired, interim at Christ [White] and Christ [Brick], Middleburg) on the death of his mother, Ethel E. Owens, on Nov. 8, 2009. Mrs. Owens was 94 years old and married for 75 years to William H. Owens, who survives. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to The Rev. Gary W. Owens, 120 Willowbrook Blvd., Lewisburg, PA 17837.



CONGREGATIONS IN TRANSITION

- **Intentional Interim:** Beaver, Beaver Springs; Sharon, Selinsgrove; Stone Valley Parish; Salem Parish; First, Mifflinburg; St. Matthew's and Church of the Savior, Williamsport; First, Mifflinburg
- **Preparing to Interview:** Trinity, Hughesville w/POS by Mt. Zion, Hughesville; Nittany Valley - Sugar Valley Parish
- **Interviewing:** Liberty Valley Parish; Grace/St. Luke, Sunbury; Sharon, Selinsgrove; Trinity, Sunbury w/POS by Trinity, Pt. Township

NEWS THIS MONTH

Synod Staff in Congregations

December 6

- Bishop at Grace, Berwick
- Stones on vacation

December 13

- Bishop at Trinity, McClure

December 20

- Bishop at St. John, Montgomery

December 27

- Beth Ann at First, Mifflinburg
- Bishop on vacation

Advent Devotional Available

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries' 2009 Advent Devotional Booklet is now available in PDF as a download from the Diakon Web site home page at <http://www.diakon.org>. Should you like a printed copy, you may request one by contacting Joann Stagge at staggej@diakon.org.

Offering helps Camp Mount Luther

The offering received at Bishop's Day this year went to Camp Mount Luther to help with the costs associated with the electrical problems the camp's been facing. Donations totaled \$186. Thanks for your generosity.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries Selects New CEO

The Diakon and Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries boards of directors Tuesday jointly and unanimously selected Mark T. Pile, MSHA, MSW, currently Diakon's chief operating officer, to be the organizations' president/CEO, effective Jan. 1, 2010.

Pile will replace the Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., who is retiring the end of this year. McKee has been president/CEO since Diakon's creation in 2000 and had served as president/CEO of The Lutheran Home at Topton and, later, Lutheran Services Northeast—one of the two organizations that created Diakon—for five years before that.

"We are delighted to name Mark Pile as our next president/CEO and look forward to working with Mark and his team to continue the excellent ministry carried out daily by Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries and its staff members," notes a communiqué released by the boards. "We believe, following our extensive search, that we have selected the absolute best candidate for this important role within Diakon."



The selection of Pile follows a more-than-year-long national search process conducted by a committee appointed by the two boards of directors and including members of both boards. The search involved multiple interviews with candidates presented by a national search firm and included committee sessions in 2008 with leaders from the fields in which Diakon serves to help define the characteristics of the ideal candidate to be Diakon's next president/CEO. Final candidates came from across the country and represented several faith traditions.

Pile was named executive vice president/chief operating officer when Diakon was created, having held a similar role with Lutheran Services Northeast. He joined LSN as senior vice president in 1997, overseeing program operations in 14 eastern Pennsylvania counties. Prior to joining LSN, he served as vice president of Somerset Hospital, a non-profit, 150-bed community hospital in western Pennsylvania. Before being named to that position in 1988, he was executive director of Twin Lakes Center, a Somerset, Pa., non-profit drug and alcohol treatment service.

Mark Pile is a 1974 graduate of Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pa., from which he received a bachelor's degree in sociology, cum laude. He earned his Master of Science in Social Work degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He also holds a master's degree in health administration from the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, Va. Mark and his wife, Susan, have six children and live in Macungie, Pa.



Healing Service for Rostered Leaders and Their Families This Monday, November 30

A Eucharistic Service for Healing will be held for USS rostered leaders and their families in the board room at the synod office in Lewisburg (Reitz Blvd. and 192) at 7:00 PM on Monday, November 30. Prayers for healing, of course, encompass more than just physical healing, and everyone is welcome to attend. This service is provided by the synod's Spirituality Task Force.

Clergy-Communicant Privilege in Pennsylvania

Mr. Kevin Derr, Esq., member of St. Luke, Williamsport, and professor at Pennsylvania College of Technology, recently presented to the West Branch Conference on the topic of "The Clergy-Communicant Privilege in Pennsylvania". The presentation interprets *Pa. Statute: 42 Pa.C.S. § 5943.*, which reads, in part, "No clergyman...who while in the course of his duties has acquired information from any person secretly and in confidence shall be compelled, or allowed without consent of such person, to disclose that information in any legal proceeding, trial or investigation before any government unit." Mr. Derr goes on to interpret *23 Pa.C.S. § 6311.* regarding mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, and *42 Pa.C.S. 5943* which excepts/prohibits clergy from mandatory reporting based on information gained through privileged communication between clergy and communicant. To view Mr. Derr's handout from his presentation, go to <http://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/The-Clergy-Privilege-in-Pennsylvania.doc>.

Adopt a Vet for Christmas With the USS Veterans Team

All congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod are invited to 'adopt a vet for Christmas' through a mission outreach by our Veterans Ministries Team. To support veterans in our area living in Veterans Administration long-term care facilities, each congregation is encouraged to donate a double bed sized comforter. The comforters should be newly purchased (to ensure they are non-allergenic) and wrapped. Gift comforters may be left at the Synod offices until December 18th. After that they will be transported by our USS Veterans Ministries Team to area Veterans Administration facilities for distribution to our grateful vets. Please take advantage of this opportunity to warm the holidays of our local veterans. For more information contact Pastor Mike Greenauer at grenauer@ptd.net or Sue Baylor at sueb123@ptd.net.

Presiding Bishop's Letter

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson has written an open letter to all ELCA members. ELCA congregations are encouraged to share this letter with their parishioners. The letter, as well as a video message from Bishop Hanson, is posted at <http://www.elca.org/faithfulmission> along with other information about budget reductions at the Lutheran Center.

"Love's Pure Light"

Copies of "Love's Pure Light," a collection of ten Christmas Candlelight sermons written and preached by Susquehanna University Chaplain Mark Wm. Radecke, are available for purchase from the office of Nancy Musser, administrative assistant to the chaplain (musser@susqu.edu). The cost is \$8.00 per copy if picked up in Weber Chapel or \$11 per copy if mailed. Checks should be made payable to Susquehanna University. The collection includes Candlelight sermons preached at SU from 1997 to 2006.

All proceeds from these direct sales are donated to SU CASA's philanthropy efforts in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and are used for community projects such as construction, free medical clinics, and vacation Bible school in three different communities. (Proceeds from copies purchased from any other location are not so donated.)



Gettysburg Seminary Preaching Perspectives Reminder

If you'd like to attend any of the following, Pastor Gregory Davidson of Faith, Lewisburg, has room for up to 5 other people to travel with him. All you have to do is get to Faith, or someplace between Lewisburg and Gettysburg.

January 28, 2010—Lent/Easter

The Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin, Interim Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hershey, PA
The Rev. Dr. Brooks Schramm, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

May 20, 2010—Preaching the Psalms

The Rev. Dr. Marty Stevens, Instructor in Biblical Studies
The Rev. Dr. Mark Oldenburg, Dean of the Chapel and Steck-Miller Professor of the Art of Worship

All of these events run from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., so the van will depart from Faith at 7 a.m. and return around 5:30 p.m. Call 523-3192 and leave your name and number to reserve a seat.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SU Christmas Candlelight Service: December 8, 2009

The annual Susquehanna University Candlelight Christmas Service will be held on Tuesday, December 8, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. at Weber Chapel Auditorium on campus. This year's theme, "Emmanuel: God With Us," reflects on the promise and presence of God made flesh in the Babe of Bethlehem. The Festival Chorus, the Women's Chorus and the SU Handbell Choir will perform during this candlelight service that annually attracts more than 1,500 people. For more information, call 570-372-4303.

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.



Holy Tuesday Chrism Mass: March 30, 2010

The annual Holy Tuesday Chrism Mass service for leaders in the Upper Susquehanna Synod will be held on Tuesday, March 30, at 10:30 AM (location to be announced). Bishop Robert L. Driesen will preside at this Eucharist service which includes the blessing of oil for use in anointing. A luncheon will follow this service for all who reserve in advance.

2010 Extravaganza Registration is Open!

Registration for the 2010 Extravaganza is open. The Extravaganza is the premier youth and family ministry continuing education and networking event for congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The main event will be held from February 5-8, 2010, at the Westin Hotel in downtown Charlotte, North Carolina. Preceding the main event, Intensive Care Courses will be held February 4-5. These courses provide in depth instruction in a particular aspect of children, youth, and family ministry.

Between 500 and 600 adults who work with young people in ELCA congregations, both professionals and volunteers, will gather at the Westin around the theme "Irresistible." Together we will explore both the "Irresistible" grace of God, and the "Irresistible" call to serve in the vocation of children, youth, and family ministry.

The event will bring together the 'best and the brightest' teachers, trainers, and thinkers in this exciting field of ministry to create the best possible continuing education event. Equally important to the Extravaganza is creating opportunities and space for spiritual renewal for adults who work with youth, along with dynamic opportunities to network, connect, and support each other.

Registration brochures were mailed this week. More information on the event can be found at <http://www.elcaymnet.org/extravaganza>, including links to download copies of the brochures, or to register online now.

Bishop's Day for Confirmands: March 21, 2010

A special event for the synod's confirmands will be held on Sunday afternoon, March 21, 2010, (location to be determined). 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. Beginning this year, individual invitations to confirmands will NOT be mailed, so pastors are asked to encourage their 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. If you have confirmands and would like to host this event in your congregation for the synod, please contact Beth Ann Stone at bethann@uss-elca.org as soon as possible.

Bishop's Retreat: May 6-7, 2010

The annual Bishop's Retreat for rostered leaders will take place on Thursday-Friday, May 6-7, 2010, at the Penn Wells Hotel in Wellsboro, PA. Dr. Erik Heen, Professor of New Testament and Greek at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, will present a yet-untitled presentation about Lutheran interpretations of scripture and resources for meeting the challenges of scriptural interpretation in the ELCA today. The registration fee for this event has not yet been set. Registration forms will be distributed after the first of the year.

Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly—June 18-19, 2010

The 2010 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly will be held at Susquehanna University on Friday-Saturday, June 18-19, 2010. Due to renovations to take place in Weber Auditorium next summer, the assembly will be held on campus in the field house (Garrett Sports Complex). Registration forms for voting members will be distributed in late February 2010.



SYNOD CALENDAR

December 21, 2009
Candidacy Committee meeting

January 10, 2010
FLOOD S.U. (A Youth Ministry Event):

January 14, 2010
Deans Meeting

January 21, 2010
Synod Council meeting

January 27, 2010
Interim Ministers Gathering

March 12, 2010
Campus Ministry Team

March 16, 2010
Synod Council meeting

March 21, 2010
Bishop's Day for Confirmands

March 25, 2010
Deans Meeting

March 30, 2010
Holy Tuesday Eucharist and Blessing of Oil

Seeking a Supply Preacher?

How do pastors or congregations obtain a supply pastor?

Any pastor regularly serving a congregation, including a stated supply pastor or an interim pastor who is the stated supply, may contact the synod office when seeking a supply preacher. Synod office staff will provide you with the names and phone numbers of supply preachers with known availability for that Sunday, beginning first with available clergy and next with available authorized lay worship leaders. To keep costs lower (for mileage reimbursement), staff will try to suggest supplies that live within easy driving distance of the congregation(s). Pastors will then make arrangements themselves with one of the supply names given. It is helpful to alert the synod office when a supply is contacted, so that the person's name may be removed from the availability list. If an arranged supply is an authorized lay worship leader who will preside at the Eucharist, the pastor should contact the synod office to request the Bishop's authorization for the ALWL's presidency on this occasion.

What are the costs for a Supply?

Supply preachers should be reimbursed for mileage both to and from their home to the congregation, and between congregations (if they lead at more than one in a parish). Mileage is reimbursed at the current IRS rate of .55 cents per mile (for 2009). The synod supply rate is \$100 for one service, \$125 for two services, and \$140 for three or more services. In a multiple-point parish, the grand total is equally shared among the congregations.

What should a pastor or congregation do if a supply is needed in an emergency?

In case of emergencies requiring Sunday morning absence--a last-minute illness, for example--please contact the Bishop to arrange for coverage.

CONTINUING ED OPPORTUNITIES

Building An Ethical Economy: January 27-29, 2010

With unprecedented economic challenges all around us, what role does theology have in defining a new economy? Trinity Institute's 2010 Conference in New York will bring together leading theologians and economists to talk about the relationship between economics and Christian belief and action. Visit trinitywallstreet.org/institute for more information.

Ministry Staff Seminar: January 30- February 2, 2010

A seminar designed for those who serve in staff settings: Associates in Ministry, Diaconal ministers, Assistant and Associate pastors, music directors, youth and family ministers, parish nurses, etc. The focus of this event is to explore the unique challenges and opportunities of serving on a ministry staff. Dynamics of staff ministry and authority of staff will be explored. It will be held in Delray Beach, Florida. More information is available at www.elca.org/StaffEvents

Transition Seminar: February 2-3, 2010

This seminar is for those persons who have recently moved from one ministry setting to another. It will explore issues of moving to a new congregation and will discuss key factors in making a transition. It will be held in Delray Beach, Florida. More information is available at www.elca.org/StaffEvents



Head of Staff Seminar: February 4-7, 2010

A seminar for those newly called as senior/head of staff pastors sponsored by the ELCA. The focus of this event will be on the role that the head of staff plays in visionary leadership of a congregation and guiding the development of a congregational staff team. It will be held in Delray Beach, Florida. More information is available at www.elca.org/StaffEvents

Attention: Small Church Clergy

Applications are now available for the Summer Collegium, a project in support of small congregations at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. Clergy (and their spouses or partners) from 25 small churches of all Christian denominations are invited to spend nine days at Virginia Seminary for encouragement, education, rest and renewal. *All expenses, including travel, books, meals, lodging, childcare at home and pulpit supply, are paid by a grant from the Lilly Endowment.*

The theme of the Summer Collegium this year is Leadership in the Small Congregation. Our keynote speaker will be Alice Mann, a prolific writer on congregational ministry, and John Bell from the Iona Community in Scotland will join our worship team for the conference.

The dates for the Summer Collegium are June 23 - July 1, 2010. Application forms are on their website, www.vts.edu/education/collegium, or can be sent in the mail by emailing SummerCollegium@vts.edu or by calling 703-461-1760. Applications must be postmarked by December 15, 2009, to be considered.

The next edition of "Headwaters" will be a combined December/January edition published on January 15, 2010. Deadline for materials to include in that edition is January 10, 2010. Please note the publication may be delayed due to the birth of the editor's first child.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
From the Upper Susquehanna Synod Staff

USS CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

| Conference | Dean | Secretary | Meetings |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| Buffalo Valley | Pastor Jill Seagle pastorjills@windstream.net | Pastor B.J. Collins collins_bj@hotmail.com | Conference Meeting: December 3 at Holy Spirit, Turbotville. 9:00 a.m.- worship, followed by meeting; January 7 at First, Watsonstown |
| Juniata Valley | Pastor Erin Bovendam Ebovendam001@luthersem.edu | Pastor James Park Bricker jimbricker@embarqmail.com | Conference Meeting: January 19 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Stephen's, Licking Creek; March 16 at St. John's, Lewistown; Post-Epiphany Party: Roth's Home on January 8 th at 6:30 p.m. |
| Middle Creek | Pastor Breen Marie Sipes breenmarie@hotmail.com | Pastor Patrick Sipes sgtmuddy@gmail.com | Conference Meetings: December 16 at St. John, Richfield with Andy Weaver's Pasta Figole; January 6 at Zion, Kratzerville with a presentation by Intentional Interims; Christmas Luncheon: December 23 at 11:30 a.m. at Tokyo Diner. RSVP to Patrick Sipes |
| North Branch | Pastor Chad Hebrink pastorchad@verizon.net | Pastor Tom Light GOPNO1@aol.com | Conference Meeting: Third Wednesday (December 16 and January 20) at St. Luke, Bloomsburg. 9:30 a.m.- worship, 10:00 a.m.- meeting |
| Tulpehocken | Pastor Brian Beissel brianthepastor@gmail.com | Pastor Christoph Teille christoph_teille@live.de | Conference Meeting: December 1 at Zion, Trevorton; January 5, at Zion, Sunbury |
| West Branch | Pastor Maurice "Chip" Frontz frontz@comcast.net | Pastor Gunther Bernhardt prbernhardt@gmail.com | Conference Meeting: Second Tuesday (December 8 and January 12) at Church of the Savior, Williamsport. 9:00 a.m.- Eucharist, 10:00- meeting |

Upper Susquehanna Synod

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Synod Staff Lead Worship
The bishop and his assistants would like to make synod visits on Sunday mornings in congregations. The bishop prefers to both preach and preside; Beth Ann and Karl-John will preach and also preside, if asked. The home pastor is usually also present for these synod visits. Please schedule with at least 6 months lead time for the bishop; less advance notice is required for his assistants.