

# CURRENTS

## Upper Susquehanna Synod News and Information

*October 20, 2009*

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**ATTACHMENTS:** • Economic Impact Survey

***A note from the Editor:***

*CURRENTS is the e-newsletter of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Please edit, copy, and use this information in bulletins, newsletters, sermons, billboards, press releases, evangelism efforts, and/or spoken announcements where helpful. If you would like to receive this newsletter and don't already (it is free, you know!), or if you have information to include in future editions, please email to <news@uss-elca.org> with your name, congregation name, and town, and that you'd like to receive Currents. Or do it the old-fashioned way and just call the synod office 570-524-9778. If you do not wish to receive this email, please email the same address and share that message. Your address will not be shared with anyone else, although you might get an occasional message that relates to the ministries of our synod from time to time. The addresses are masked so that everyone receiving this newsletter does not have access to the other addresses. Please share this information with others!*

*The next edition of Currents is planned for November 15, 2009 with a publication deadline of November 10, 2009.*

## NEWS IN THIS ISSUE

### Organist Wanted

Sharon Lutheran Church, Selinsgrove, is seeking an Organist to play two Eucharistic services on Sunday mornings plus festival services and accompanying one choir rehearsal per week (Sept-May). Background on both pipe organ and piano is necessary. Salary commensurate with education and experience. Send cover letter and resume to: Carrie Dunn at Sharon Lutheran Church, 120 S. Market Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870 or email: [carrie.dunn@sharonlc.org](mailto:carrie.dunn@sharonlc.org).

### Synod Council News

The Upper Susquehanna Synod Council met for their scheduled meeting on September 17, 2009, at the Evergreen Center at Camp Mount Luther. The council's mission-related discussion this month was on the ELCA Churchwide Assembly's decisions regarding rostering persons in committed, publically accountable, same-gendered relationships. Other action included:

- Adopting a new investment policy
- Hearing a report on the recent electrical problems at Camp Mount Luther and authorizing the camp to have a campaign to contact congregations for funding for that project and debt reduction
- Making the following appointments: Bishop's Committee on Worship: Connie Fladland, Pastor William Esborn, David Reier; Bishop's Committee on Ecumenical Relations: Pastor Josh Reinsburrow, Pastor Ricky Philips; Global Mission Team: Pastor Lois Martin; Liberia Task Force: Pastor Ronald Shellhamer; Ansbach-Wuerzburg Kirchenkreis Task Force: Douglas and Barbara Houseknecht, Deanna Bickhart; Candidacy Committee: Pastor Gretchen Johanson, Rick Hoffman; Youth and Family Ministry Team: Pastor Catrina Ciccone, Molly Mitchell, Pastor Bill Petry; Reconciliation Team: Dorothy Anderson, Kathleen Bingman, Pastor Jim Bricker, Maggie Henderson, Janine Labagh, Pastor Gary Roth, Ken Roush, Pastor Sonja Ware, Meghan Weaver.

### News from Camp Mount Luther

- Two Appeals Underway: Camp Mount Luther's Annual Fund appeal is underway for 2009! Letters went out in late August and the appeal will continue until the end of the year. This year's annual fund letter was written by Amy Dressler, summer assistant director. In addition, the camp is soliciting funds to help with an emergency electrical situation. The camp has suffered several lightning strikes in the last few years. It was discovered after the latest strike this summer that much of the electrical system needed to be upgraded due to some deficiencies. The cost of these improvements is \$75,000. The camp executive team gave approval to move forward to start the work but the camp now needs to find ways to finance this project. If you would like to give a special gift to help with these expenses, please send it to the camp office marked "Electrical."
- Summer Camp Changes: A special director's task force met in late September and worked to breathe some new improvements into our summer program. There are lots of neat new changes to build upon Mount Luther's wonderful traditions. More information is forthcoming on new look to the camp's summer program.

### October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Did you know?

- One in four women and one in nine men in the United States are victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives (Center for Disease Control, 2005).
- At least three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each day (Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data, 2003).
- Females age 20-24 are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006).
- Domestic violence crosses ethnic and cultural boundaries.
- We are all called to denounce and combat domestic violence and encourage greater awareness in our congregations and communities (ELCA Social Policy Action, "Violence Against Women," 1995).

For more information to raise awareness about domestic violence, visit <http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen>.

*Note: See the events section for a Family Violence Workshop being held soon!*

### **Leave a Legacy for Ministry and Mission**

Would you like to make a gift to your congregation and/or other favorite church charities but are not sure what your future financial needs will be? You can make charitable giving part of your will or you could simply change the beneficiary statement of an insurance policy, qualified retirement plan, commercial annuity, or bank or brokerage account. There are many ways you can make an estate gift to support your favorite church charity without sacrificing your personal financial security. For more information on how to include your favorite Church charities in your estate planning, call Pr. Greg Kramer at the Lutheran Planned Giving Office at 570-374-2044 or call the ELCA Foundation, 800-638-3522, ext. 2970 or visit our website at <http://www.elca.org/fo>.

### **News from the Mission Investment Fund (MIF)**

A branch office at every computer! MIF offers the convenience of online banking. All you need is a computer and an internet connection. MIF investors can take advantage of this great convenience which makes banking so easy. You can monitor your MIF accounts; provide for the transfer of funds between accounts and even take advantage of a Bill Pay option. Imagine paying your monthly bills without using another stamp or going to the mailbox. This option is available to individuals, congregations, and ministries of the church. For more information about online banking or about any MIF investment or loan products contact area representative Pr. Mark Wimmer: 267-203-1137 or [mark.wimmer@elca.org](mailto:mark.wimmer@elca.org)

### **Host a Fall Fair Trade Fair!**

Connect your congregation to the global community by hosting a Lutheran World Relief Fair Trade Fair. Plan now: fall festivals, Thanksgiving and Christmas are perfect for bringing beautiful handcrafts right into your church or community. Every Fair directly benefits the artisans who create the beautiful products sold, offering shoppers high-quality crafts and an opportunity to make a difference. In addition, Lutheran World Relief receives a portion of every purchase to support our mission and ministry. Visit [lwr.org/handcraft](http://lwr.org/handcraft) for more information.

### **Connect to the Global Church**

Simon is 12 years old. He and his three younger brothers live in a small village in southern Africa. Simon wakes early each morning and goes to the community well to get four buckets of water for the family for the day. He then starts a small cooking fire and begins to make breakfast for his siblings. Simon is the sole caregiver for his brothers. For more information on the work the ELCA does with children like Simon, visit <http://www.elca.org/africa>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Health Care Reform Rally: October 20, 2009**

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is sponsoring a Health Care Reform Rally at the Rotunda of the Pennsylvania Capital in Harrisburg, on Tuesday, October 20, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. This event is being held in support of State (HB1660/SB400) and National (HR676/S703) Health Care Reform Efforts. Join thousands of single payer (publicly financed, privately delivered health care, similar to Medicare) supporters in the rotunda of the Capital Building and make your voice be heard. Visit <http://www.healthcare4allpa.org/rally.htm> for a complete list of speakers and sponsoring organizations

### **Gettysburg Seminary Weekend: October 23-24, 2009**

Gettysburg Seminary invites women and men (college age and older) who are thinking about attending a seminary to come experience the LTSG community first hand at Seminary Weekend, Oct. 23-24. Join faculty, administration, staff, students and their families to learn more about Gettysburg's distinctive curriculum, community life, contextual education settings, worship life, ecumenical opportunities, costs, and available financial aid. The cost of participation will be paid by the Seminary (including on-site housing, food, and transportation from and to local airports). Register by October 15. Go to [www.LSTG.edu](http://www.LSTG.edu) for details and registration information.

### **Small Church Conference: October 24, 2009**

The Small Church Conference, co-sponsored by the USS and Allegheny Synods and the Episcopal Diocese of Central PA, will take place on Saturday, October 24, under the theme, "Mission in Every Context". Session leaders are Elizabeth Yenchko, USS Director for Evangelical Mission, and The Rev. John Hoover, Senior Consultant for Small Church Development for the Episcopal Diocese of Central PA. We will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lewistown from 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Cost will be \$10 per person, or \$25 for a congregational team. What a deal! That's because we really want to encourage congregations to send teams of people. A registration form is available at <http://www.uss-elca.org/small-church-conference-october-24-2009>

### **Liberia-bound Cargo Container Loading: October 24, 2009**

The date has been set for loading the next shipping cargo container bound for Liberia-Saturday, October 24, 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM at the old mill at Susquehanna University, 210 West Sassafras St. in Selinsgrove.

### **2009 TEY Affirmation of Baptism Festivals: October 24 and November 14, 2009**

Theological Education with Youth, a program of Gettysburg and Philadelphia Seminaries, will be holding two Affirmation of Baptism Festivals this fall. First on Saturday, October 24th, on the campus of Philadelphia Seminary, and then Saturday, November 14th, on the campus of Gettysburg Seminary, both running from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This year's theme will be "To Live Among God's Faithful People", as we explore what it means to live out our baptism in the midst of the people of God. Congregations are invited to bring up to 4 9th grade youth for a day full of worship, study, activity, and dialogue alongside seminarians and faculty. Registration costs, including light breakfast, lunch, and snacks, is \$25 per person. Any registration questions may be directed to Sherry Rippman at [srippman@ltsg.edu](mailto:srippman@ltsg.edu). More information will be available and registration is now open online at [www.theologicaleducationwithyouth.com](http://www.theologicaleducationwithyouth.com).

### **LARC Day of Dialogue: October 26, 2009**

The annual Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic Day of Dialogue will be held on October 26 from 9:30-3:00 at the Cardinal Keeler Center, Union Deposit Road, in Harrisburg. This year we will be observing the 10th anniversary of the milestone agreement, the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification", which brought theological reconciliation among Lutherans and Catholics about the central issue of the Reformation. The speakers are ecumenically experienced scholars from their respective traditions on the topic of Justification: the Rev. Dr. Cheryl M. Peterson (Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH); the Rev. Msgr. John A. Radano (recently served as staff member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 1984-2008 and Head of the Pontifical Council's Western Section. Currently an adjunct professor at Seton Hall University, NJ); and the Very Reverend William H. Petersen (Professor of Ecclesiastical and Ecumenical History, and Provost, Bexley Hall Episcopal Seminary, Columbus, OH). All clergy and interested laity are invited and encouraged to attend this special day of dialogue.

### **Family Violence Workshop: October 29, 2009**

In observance of Domestic Violence Month, Diakon Congregational Health Ministries will be sponsoring a workshop addressing Family Violence on Thursday, October 29, 2009, at Church of the Savior in Williamsport. The workshop is scheduled from 9:00-11:30 a.m. - cost is \$10. This workshop is for clergy and will address the issues surrounding family violence in rural PA. Any questions may be directed to Debbie Best at 320-0520 or [bestd@diakon.org](mailto:bestd@diakon.org).

### **Camp Mount Luther Benefit Auction: October 31, 2009**

Come and spend a day at Camp Mount Luther in support of their growing ministry! On Saturday, October 31st, 2009, a benefit auction, featuring quilt and craft items, will be held as a fundraiser to support the camp's efforts to enhance their program and facilities. Doors open at the Evergreen Center at Mount Luther at 2:00 p.m. with the auction starting at 3:00 p.m. There will be concession-style refreshments available for purchase.

There will also be a THEMED BASKET silent auction taking place at the same time. You can purchase tickets for the silent auction, as with a Chinese auction, and the drawing for these themed baskets will take place starting at 3:30 p.m. The event benefits the camp's 40 By Faith Capital Campaign which is now working to retire the debt of the Evergreen Center. Pictures of the items will be posted on the camp's website at <http://www.campmountluther.org>. The quilts and craft items have been made by local residents, most of whom are affiliated with a Lutheran church in the area.

### **Jump Start the Word: November 1, 2009**

Feeling the need for a Bible Study in your congregation? "Jumpstart the Word: How to Begin Bible Study in Your Congregation" will be held in four locations this fall throughout our synod. Since we are a "Book of Faith Synod", and believe in the power of God's Word to form faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, come and learn about some ways you can implement Bible Study in your congregation. This workshop will be offered on one more date: November 1, at Messiah, Mifflintown.

### **Retirement Program for Rev. Daun McKee: November 6, 2009**

You are cordially invited to the Service of Farewell and Godspeed for The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D. President and CEO of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries. The event will take place on Friday, November 6, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2000 Chestnut Street, Camp Hill, PA. All are welcome.

### **"The Economy's Impact on Your Congregation" Workshop: November 12, 2009**

An Educational Workshop will be presented by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in cooperation with the Upper Susquehanna Synod on Thursday, November 12, 2009, to discuss how the current economic climate affects your congregation. The event is free and includes materials and lunch. It begins with registration at 9:30 a.m.; the workshop will run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will be held at the Best Western Country Cupboard Inn, 101 Hafer Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837. Please RSVP to Cindy Kincaid at 1-888-776-5669 or [cindy.kincaid@thrivent.com](mailto:cindy.kincaid@thrivent.com) by Friday, November 6. The Upper Susquehanna Synod Economic Task Force will make a presentation following lunch. For more information, contact Pastor Karl-John Stone, at 1-570-524-9778 or [karljohn@uss-elca.org](mailto:karljohn@uss-elca.org).

### **Winter-Break Retreat for Young Adults: January 3-10, 2010**

The ELCA's Project Connect presents "Two-Way Street Retreat," a Winter-Break Retreat for Young Adults age 18-30, in Baltimore, MD, January 3-10, 2010. Young adults from all over the East Coast are gathering in Baltimore for a week of service. Explore the ecology of public ministry through the church in tangible ways. Make lots of friends and meet a variety of people engaged in real life public ministry! Cost is \$25...no joke! For registration/brochure, go to [www.projectconnect.org](http://www.projectconnect.org).

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

The Gathering in the East (a.k.a. GIE) is the premier ELCA East Coast children and youth worker's event and convention dedicated to training, renewal, and networking. It will be held on April 16-18, 2010, at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East. This annual event will take place in 2010 in our own backyard...a great opportunity for USS youth leaders! For further information, visit the Gathering in the East's website at <http://www.gatheringintheeast.org>. Online registration will be available in November 2009. Invest your time in a weekend filled with workshops, speakers, music, and networking with fellow colleagues who are called and challenged by God to minister to youth and their families. Early registration will begin December 2009. The Upper Susquehanna Synod contact person is Robin Kunkel at Sharon Lutheran Church, Selinsgrove, 570-374-8444.

Dori Baker will be the Keynote speaker, talking about vocation and calling. Jay Gamelin is the musician who will lead workshops on Post Modernism and the changing church. Dr. Rick Carlson will be back to discuss the Book of Faith. Sandy Grier will give good advice on choosing curriculums as well as selling materials at Along the Way Bookstore. Naomi Carriker will give insight on Children and Youth with special needs. The planning team members will lead YM 101 and 201, an open discussion on practical and spiritual practices with youth and what if situations...all questions are welcome. Ed Hartman will impart his computer knowledge of Facebook and how to use it in your ministry. He will also offer a Facebook for beginners workshop.

## **MONTHLY FEATURES**

**(W)holy, (W)holy, (W)holy: Health, Healing and Wholeness Article for November 2009**

*“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” (Ps. 91:11-12NRSV)*

The psalmist reminds us of God’s unceasing love and desire to protect us, but let’s face it, he needs our cooperation - particularly when it comes to avoiding unnecessary risk to the health and safety of his people.

It is already November, and time to think about the holidays, and visits with our families. With so many people traveling, driving safety takes on critical importance at these times, especially for those drivers who are carrying precious cargo - their children. Below are ten mistakes parents too often make when installing a child’s car seat:

- 1. Using a car seat without knowing its history.** It is tempting to borrow a child car seat from a family member or friend, or to purchase one at a yard/tag sale, but think twice before doing so. The seat should be labeled with the manufacturer date and model number. Check for any recalls by going to: <http://www.odi.nhtsa.gov/recalls/childseat.ftm> Do not use it if the seat is more than six years old, has visible cracks, or has been in a crash.
- 2. Placing the seat in the wrong spot.** The safest place is in the back seat, away from active air bags. For those cars equipped with side-curtain air bags, be sure to read the car seat instructions and car owner’s manual for any additional precautions.
- 3. Using the car seat as a replacement crib.** [According to MayoClinic.com] A study from 2009 indicated that sitting upright in a car seat to sleep, may compress a newborn’s chest and lead to lower levels of oxygen. Be sure the infant seat is always reclined. Even mild airway obstruction can have developmental consequences.
- 4. Not Reading instructions carefully.** Make sure the child seat is secure - allow no more than one inch of movement from side-to-side or front-to-back - and that it is facing the right direction! If using an infant or convertible seat in the rear-facing position, be sure to use the harness slots described in the car seat’s instruction manual. Thread the [harness] straps through the car seat shell and pad. Place the harness or chest clip even with your child’s armpits - not at the abdomen or neck, insuring that it is lying flat against your baby’s chest and over his/her hips with no slack. Position the car seat’s handle according to manufacturer’s instructions. Don’t hang things from the handle.
- 5. Improperly trying to keep your child upright.** Recline the car seat according to manufacturer’s instructions so that your infant’s head does not flop forward. You can place a tightly rolled towel, or “swim “noodle” at the vehicle seat bight (curve), then position the car seat on the raised object. If the baby slouches down or to the side of the car seat, place padding around (never under or behind) him/her.
- 6. Moving to a forward-facing car seat too soon.** It is tempting to face the car seat forward so you can see your child’s face, but don’t do this until the child weighs 30-40 pounds. Start with a convertible seat, or go from an infant seat to a different seat as the child grows. Always install the seat according to the manufacturers and car owner’s manual instructions.
- 7. Dressing your child in bulky outerwear.** The child’s chest harness may not be as effective when placed over padded clothing. If it is cold, dress the child in a lightweight jacket and hat. Buckle the harness snugly, then tuck a blanket around the child for warmth.
- 8. Moving to a booster seat too soon.** Older kids need a booster seat to allow for an adult safety belt to fit properly. You will know this when: your child has topped the weight height limits of the current (often 40-80 lbs.) seat; your child’s shoulders are above the car seat’s top harness slots; your child’s ears have reached the top of the car seat.
- 9. Using a booster seat incorrectly.** Booster seats without a harness must be used with a lap and shoulder belt - never a lap-only belt! Make sure the lap belt lies low and snug across your child’s upper thighs and that the shoulder belt crosses the middle of your child’s chest and shoulder (not the neck). Some booster seats have no back. Backless seats also must be used with a lap and shoulder belt - never a lap-only belt. If your vehicle has low seat backs or does not have a headrest to protect your child’s head and neck in a crash, consider using a high-back booster that fits your child’s height and weight.
- 10. Using the vehicle safety belt too soon.** Most kids are ready to safely use an adult seat belt/shoulder harness between the ages of 8 and 12. Your child is ready when he/she reaches a height of 4 feet 9 inches, and your child sits against the back of the vehicle seat with his/her knees bent comfortably at the edge of the seat. The lap belt

rests flat across his/her upper thighs, and the shoulder belt rests on you're child's shoulder - not on the neck or throat!

Finally, do not allow your child to tuck the shoulder belt under his/her arm or behind their back. Stay away from products that promise to make the belts fit better, and **never, ever** buckle 2 children in one seatbelt. If you have questions, contact your state highway safety office for information on how to safely use a child seat. In addition, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration can help you find a child car seat inspection station in your area.

Resources: Thanks to: [www.mayoclinic.com/health/car-seat-safety/MY00824](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/car-seat-safety/MY00824) ; Chris Smith, Highway Safety Specialist, PA Community Traffic Safety Project and Sandy Nolan, Injury Prevention Consultant Northcentral District Pennsylvania Department of Health

*Thanksgiving blessings!*

*Debbie Best, Program Coordinator Congregational Health Ministries & Family Life Services*

### **Nurse's Notes - Bulletin Blurbs for November 2009**

- November 1**      **Take three bites less of everything.** Three bites less of a typical fast-food burger will save you 100 calories, while leaving a couple of bites on your plate at each meal will spare you significant calories. Since our portions are almost always more than we need, you won't even notice. (<http://pbchd.net/nutrition/nutrition-week-1-full.html>)
- November 8**      **"...do not let the sun go down on your anger."** (*Ephesians 4a:26b*). "Researchers have found that heart patients who stifle angry feelings are twice as likely to report poor sleep quality as those who share them. Both too little sleep and roiling emotions can elevate stress hormones, taking a toll on overall health." (*Prevention Magazine, October 2009, pg. 15*)
- November 15**      **Contact wearers - replace your lens case!** The American Optometric Association indicates that 25% of lens wearers don't replace their cases - leading to a buildup of bacteria in nooks and crannies of the case. Cases should be replaced every three months. In between, be sure to rinse and clean thoroughly after every use, allowing the case to air-dry, and always begin lens care by washing and drying your hands!
- November 22**      Thanksgiving Day has more than double the number of home cooking fires than an average day according to the U.S. Fire Administration. In fact, each year more than 4,000 fires occur on Thanksgiving Day.
- To help prevent home fires this Thanksgiving, the Red Cross suggests the following tips:
- Keep potholders and food wrappers at least three feet away from heat sources while cooking
  - Wear tighter fitting clothing with shorter sleeves when cooking
  - Make sure all stoves, ovens, and ranges have been turned off when you leave the kitchen
  - Set timers to keep track of turkeys and other food items that require extended cooking times
  - Turn handles of pots and pans on the stove inward to avoid accidents
  - Follow all manufacturer guidelines regarding the appropriate use of appliances
  - After guests leave, designate a responsible adult to walk around the home making sure that all candles and smoking materials are extinguished Source:  
(<http://www.oregonredcross.org/general.asp?SN=201&OP=2806&SUOP=3954&SUOP2=3955&IDCapitulo=663B01D44V>)
- November 29**      **Have you heard about Freecycle?** The Freecycle Network is a grassroots non-profit movement of folks who are giving away items they no longer want. Membership is free, and it is a great way to re-cycle! A local group member oversees updates and postings. Got to [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) and type the name of your community in the box, and hit "Go". You will be given a listing of communities and instructions in how to Freecycle!

## Safety Tips for Ministries from Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company for November 2009

### Is Your Building Ready for Sweater Weather?

The chilly temperatures mean a change of seasons and a change of wardrobe. They also mean it's time to take a look around your facility to see what needs to be done to prepare for the cold winter ahead. Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company offers a cold weather maintenance checklist that can help you. The checklist examines things like:

- Clearing gutters, downspouts, and drains of debris
- Sealing drafts around doors and windows
- Wrapping heating tape around exposed pipes

You can download a copy of this checklist, along with other helpful information about preparing for winter at <http://www.SafetyCentralOnline.com>, Brotherhood Mutual's online library of free safety and risk management materials. If you have specific questions about cold weather maintenance, you can also check with your insurance agent.