

HEADWATERS

News for Upper Susquehanna Synod Leaders

October 25, 2011



God's work. Our hands.

Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA, PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837

NEWS BRIEFS

New January Date For Bishop's Day: The annual one-day Bishop's Day event for rostered leaders will take place on Thursday, January 26, 2012, at Buffalo Valley Common, Lewisburg. Reservations for lunch will be accepted later in the year. The snow date for this event (in the event of weather-related postponement) is now Thursday, February 2, 2012.

A Gift for the Person Who Has Everything: Here are two great options this Christmas for gifts for people who already have so much:

ELCA Good Gifts: Instead of a traditional gift, consider making a donation in someone's honor, and then sending them a World Hunger card to let them know of the gift. You can feel good about giving a gift that honors the person, they can appreciate the meaningful work behind the gift, and someone in Iowa or Indonesia (or anywhere in between) will benefit because of it. A full range of prices and options are available, and the Good Gifts website makes it easy to order free gift cards to announce your gift, or send an [eCard](#) directly to your gift recipient.

Carol Main Scholarship Fund: This Fund, created in 2007 to honor Mrs. Carol Main, wife of USS Bishop Emeritus A. Donald Main, funds scholarships for spouses of Liberian Lutheran clergy seeking educational opportunities to better themselves, their families, and their communities. The Fund currently supports two Liberian women pursuing their goals. Contributions of any size are appreciated, and donors of \$10 or more receive a gift enclosure card describing the fund-suitable for including in a Christmas or other occasion card. (Please indicate your preference for a Christmas or "plain" gift enclosure card.) Make checks payable to "Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA" (memo: Main Scholarship), PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

Synod to Receive Matching Gift for Liberia Work: The Upper Susquehanna Synod's Liberia Companion Synod Committee received word that a matching gift of \$12,500 has been offered by an anonymous donor in support of the re-roofing project at the Lutheran Training Institute (LTI) of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. The committee intends to send a small work team to Liberia in early 2012 to begin to replace missing roofs on some of the half-dozen buildings on campus that have stood open to the elements since Liberia's civil war ended in 2003. LTI is a vocational and educational school, training many ex-combatants with job skills for employment. A literacy program, supported by the USS, is also reaching dozens more Liberians in the surrounding villages.

Materials detailing the re-roofing project were shared with USS congregations in August, and are available for download here: www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/How-can-you-help.LTI-roof..pdf. A total of \$2,100 in designated gifts has already been received, and donations will be accepted through early 2012. Please help our synod make the most of these generous matching gifts by considering a special offering or fundraiser in your congregation. Contributions may be sent to the synod office: "Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA" (memo: Liberia Re-roofing Project), PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

Organ Available: Carmen Cunningham, a member of Faith, Lewisburg, is moving and needs to find a home for her two-manual Rogers organ. If you are interested in it (or know someone who might be) then call Carmen at 522-9319 to work out the details. Time is of the essence!

MILESTONES

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Williamsport (Pastor Beverly Cotner) will hold their closing worship service on Sunday, November 6, at 3:00 p.m. The congregation had previously voted to close at the end of 2011.

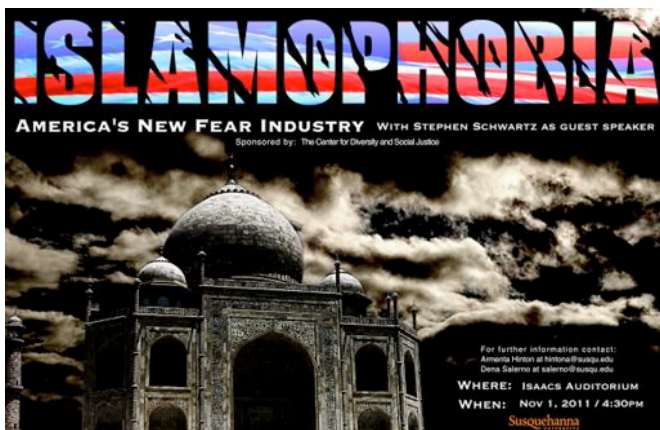
Pastor Lois Martin has agreed to serve Faith United Church of Christ, State College, as an intentional interim pastor, beginning September 1, under call of the Synod Council. She is able to serve this UCC congregation under contract through the ELCA's full communion agreement.

Pastor Detlef Huckfelt (St. Michael, Cogan Station) was installed as the part-time campus pastor of Mansfield University on Sunday, September 18, at the First Presbyterian Church, Mansfield. He continues to serve as the called pastor of St. Michael on a ¾ basis.

UPCOMING EVENTS & CONTINUING ED

Preaching Perspectives at LTSG on November 17, January 26, and May 17: This continuing education series offers valuable insights and resources for the task of preaching. Each presenter engages the biblical texts from the perspective of his or her particular discipline. Registration and refreshments begin at 9:00 a.m. These sessions begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude by 3:00 p.m. Cost is \$30 per session/\$100 for all four sessions. Information at: <http://www.ltsg.edu/Lifelong-Learners/Preaching-Perspectives>.

- **Thursday, November 17, 2011, *Through the Lenses of the New Testament, Theology and Ethics: Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany***
 - The Rev. Dr. Richard P. Carlson, The Rev. Dr. James M. Childs, Jr.
- **Thursday, January 26, 2012, *ON Scripture Lectionary Presentation: Tying the Biblical Text to Current Events Through Exegesis and Interpretation***
 - The Rev. Dr. Matthew L. Skinner, Dr. Greg Carey
- **Thursday, May 17, 2012, *Modern Day Miracle-Makers: Preaching on the Power of Community and Ephesians: Cultural Context Then and Now***
 - The Rev. Dr. Angela Zimmann, The Rev. Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann



November 1, 2011

Lecture by Stephen Suleyman Schwartz: On November 1st at 4:30 p.m. in Isaacs Auditorium in Seibert Hall on the campus of Susquehanna University, Stephen Schwartz, an American Muslim journalist, columnist, and author, will speak about America's new fear industry, Islamophobia. He is the executive director of the Center for Islamic Pluralism, a think tank that seeks to educate the American public about the reality of moderate Islam and to help American

Muslims toward integration as an equal and respected religious community into the American interfaith environment. Mr. Schwartz has been published in a variety of media outlets, most notably The Wall Street Journal, and has authored many articles and books, including *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*. The community is invited to attend this very informative lecture.

November 14-16, 2011

PA State Pastors' Conference: The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is now accepting registrations for the 2011 State Pastors' Conference. Scheduled for November 14-16 at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East, (4751 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111), this year's conference will explore "Practical and Practiced Awe: Reclaiming the Joy and Wonder of Our Call." With a rich menu of plenary presentations and workshops, the conference will help clergy to rethink these core practices and set them in more faithful and celebrative contexts. A diverse selection of workshops fills out the rich menu of learning opportunities. Cost for the event is \$150 (with a \$25 late fee for registrations received

after November 7). Visit <http://tinyurl.com/6h6cxhf> for more details, including a registration brochure you can download, a news release that tells more about the conference, and links to a site where you can register for the conference and arrange to pay with your MasterCard, Visa, or Discover credit card and reserve an overnight room at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East. Or, if you prefer, email pcc@pachurches.org to request a brochure by snail mail. (Be sure to include your postal mailing address.)

November 19, 2011

Front Porchin' Evangelism Workshop: The Upper Susquehanna Synod will sponsor an Evangelism Workshop with Pastor Jake Jacobson, Director for Evangelical Mission in the Northwest PA Synod, on Saturday, November 19, 2011, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at Christ Lutheran Church, Milton (1125 Mahoning Street). The session, called "Front Porchin'" will look at how easy evangelism is—it's about sharing a story. It is your story and God's story shared with another. Evangelism is sharing what God in Christ has done in your life. We don't even have to go out looking to evangelize- God provides us with all the places to do this sharing without ever having to go knock on a stranger's door. God gives us natural front porches where we live, work, and play. There, God introduces us to others, and sits with us as we share our lives, our stories, and the Christ within us with those who regularly gather there with us. How do we best utilize the front porches God calls us into or onto? What is our role in this process? How do we repair our damaged or dis-used porches? Front Porchin' is a simple process that helps congregations and individuals reassess their gifts and sharpen their skills for sharing the good news with others (both inside and outside the community of faith). Register through the synod website: www.uss-elca.org.

November 20, 2011

Jazz Vespers at Susquehanna University
An opportunity for pastors to worship! The Susquehanna University Office of the Chaplain and the Department of Music present "Worship in a New Key", a series of special worship services providing opportunities for pastors, congregational leaders, worship and music committees, and parishioners to experience a variety of liturgies. Services begin at 6:30 p.m. in Weber Chapel on the SU campus. Jazz Vespers will take place on November 20. A Contemporary/Alternative worship service will take place on February 12, 2012.

Here is what is coming up in November's *The Lutheran Magazine*:

USS Congregation Featured: Christ, Milton, will be featured in the column, "Two Months Out."

Back On Campus: In November, *The Lutheran* brings back its special "Higher education" issue. Look for 26 pages of news and articles that will tell you what's happening at ELCA colleges, universities and seminaries. In "Community Connections," see how ELCA colleges make life better for their neighbors. Read "Pastoral Debt" to learn how the ELCA rallies to help reduce student debt for leaders. In "Road Trip!" a student tells about her visit to a seminary, camp and congregation with her campus ministry group. You can also meet Jacob Schmalzle, a Wittenberg University graduate who started a fair-trade venture in Kenya. And read up on campus news with 12 pages of brief items.

Stay Connected: In *The Lutheran's* November issue, find out what's happening in the church—locally and globally: **see** how Iowa farmers are lifting hay and spirits in drought-stricken Texas ... **discover** how serving meals makes sister congregations in Philadelphia grow ... **meet** Melvin, who moves mountains of hopelessness for youth in Ohio ... **travel** to Kenya, where Lutherans help women who are refugees from the famine rebuild their lives ... **go** to Houston, where a musical has kids teaching others how gifts can live on and on ... and **learn** how to host a "Three Kings Party" or get a bright idea for an Epiphany project.



Best Practices

Sharing What Works in Our Congregations to Further the Gospel of Jesus Christ

How and when should we survey the congregation about worship styles and practices? (from the ELCA website):

Whenever congregational leaders contemplate a change in worship practices, frequently the idea of conducting a survey of the members is suggested. What style of music do people prefer? What worship times are most convenient? Should we have weekly communion or not? These topics, as well as many others, can be among the survey questions considered regarding a congregation's worship practices.

While surveys may be helpful, if not carefully used they may actually thwart the decision-making capabilities of leaders that the congregation has already chosen. Most decisions involving congregational worship practices are made by committees or staff people. Such persons have often had years of experience in leading and preparing for corporate worship, and in most cases they need to be trusted to plan for worship that is not only appealing to many people, but that is also faithful to Christian tradition, and that can broaden the experiences of a particular congregation.

That said, there may indeed be occasions for conducting surveys of a congregation's worship preferences. One basic caveat regarding surveys: Do not survey a congregation about something for which the outcome has already been determined. For example, imagine that a worship committee has already decided that it wants to increase the number of services that are offered each week. If it is going to go through with this decision regardless of the results from a survey (even if a survey indicates that a majority of members are not interested in having additional services), then nothing will have been gained by conducting a survey. In fact such a decision of the committee may end up being a great sore point.

When Surveys Might be Useful

Surveys are often best used among current members to determine preferences that have relatively low stakes. Let's think about that sentence a little more. Oftentimes the reason stated for a survey is to determine how to increase worship attendance. But unless one takes a random sampling of unchurched people in the community, or even of inactive members of the congregation, quite likely the target group is not going to be reached by a survey. Obviously, if a survey is to be completed some Sunday at worship, then it will not be an indicator for the preferences of those who do

not worship. Even when a survey is mailed out to a large number of people, specifically to include those who do not worship regularly, the percentage of returns is often too low to be helpful.

Keeping surveys confined to low stake issues will help avoid major theological battles or other heated debates. A survey that is narrowly conducted around worship times may be an example of a fairly low stake issue. Asking people to decide between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., or 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. services is probably going to be fairly non-controversial. Just be aware that if you conduct a poll during a 9:00 a.m. service, you may be excluding most people who wish that they could come to worship at 10:00 a.m.! Keep in mind also that the longer a survey, the more likely it is that it will not be completed.

An Alternative to Surveys

People are often hesitant to make a decision in favor of something that they have not experienced before. It's called having a fear of the unknown. Yet oftentimes when people have had the opportunity to experience something new (and especially when there has been adequate preparation and gentle encouragement), they may actually discover that they like the new practice. Having a trial period of a few weeks or months may help worshipers to get the feel for a new practice in a way that may be less threatening, especially if the old pattern can always return.

New musical settings of the liturgy are often introduced with the idea that they will be used for a specific season, perhaps for Lent or during the summer. By the end of an entire season, there should be enough comments and sustained experience for worship planners to determine whether or not the musical setting could be used again.

Patterns of more frequent communion may be introduced in a trial period pattern as well. If a congregation regularly communes twice a month, perhaps the entirety of an Easter season (seven weeks) can offer communion weekly. Following such a trial period, worship planners can determine whether the congregation would be more favorable towards making a permanent change, or if there are concerns that would need to be addressed before such a change was possible.

Trial periods (perhaps even accompanied with an evaluation form or survey tool concluding them) offer

plenty of opportunities for worshipers to air their views, but they also allow for worship planners and congregation councils to make informed decisions that consider a number of factors, including congregational opinion.

Has your congregation done any worship surveys? Do you have any best practices when it comes to worship and music? If so, please contact news@uss-elca.org.

Ideas for You: *The Lutheran* is a **resource** for your congregation and members. In November, your study group can discuss Exodus 16:1-36. Pastor Peter W. Marty says we never seem to have enough and the prospect of shortfall frightens us silly. Also in November, ELCA theologians help us think about the “Authority of the Bible.” Parents can get advice on practicing hospitality as a family and ideas for having kids lead grace at Thanksgiving. And readers can learn how three congregations have provided the church with some 100 pastors (to help your discussion on this article, a study guide is available at www.thelutheran.org; click on “study guides.” It’s free to print and Web subscribers).

Social Ministry Coach Travels to Trinity, Hughesville: *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 of your congregation 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.*

Trinity Lutheran in Hughesville has many outreach ministries helping the community; however, the one I experienced was their participation in Family Promise. Family Promise is a national program that has come to our area. It’s a non-denominational organization for families in transition. Part of a national network, Lycoming County is one of more than 159 networks across the United States. There are over 5,000 congregations and 110,000 volunteers making up these networks. Within our area, 13 congregations are hosts. This means that three to four times per year, for one week at a time, host congregations provide overnight lodging, meals, and hospitality for up to 14 people or three families. They also transport the families to and from their church to the Day Center in Williamsport.

The evening I was at Trinity for supper, three families (11 people) were part of this ministry. One little boy, about six, was quite pleased that he could recite the Lord’s Prayer quickly. I timed him and he said the entire prayer in eight seconds. I was quite impressed that this little guy knew the complete prayer.

This is a wonderful ministry that helps families stay together in difficult times. Trinity has a room with bedding for each family in their Sunday School area. Two adults from the congregation must stay overnight in case there are any problems or concerns. Trinity also has volunteer groups each night responsible for dinner. The night I was in attendance the congregation council hosted the meal. The next night, the Girl Scouts were hosting the meal.

On average, almost 80 percent of the families who participate in these programs find permanent or transitional housing. Guests without jobs usually find them or enter job training. Others even enroll in school.

There are a number of congregations in Hughesville that support this ministry through donations of food, time, and money. If you think your congregation would like to be a host, you will need volunteers who provide a variety of services: cooking and serving meals, playing with children or helping with homework, possibly a driver(s) for transportation in the morning and evening and staying overnight.

If you live in Lycoming County and want to become a host or supporting congregation contact Melissa Magargle, Executive Director of Family Promise of Lycoming County. If you live in another county and Family Promise is not in your community, contact Magargle to get additional information and names of people to contact to get started. Her phone numbers are 570-567-7103 or 570-567-7105 or you can visit their website at www.familypromiselycoming.org or e-mail familypromiselycoming@hotmail.com.

“Best Practices” is a chance for leaders to share ideas with others about what works best in the congregation, especially when it comes to such church issues as evangelism, worship, Christian education, social ministry, personnel, property, or any other relevant topic. If you have a best practice you’d like to share, please contact Chad Hershberger at news@uss-elca.org with your name, phone number, and e-mail so we can be in touch and share your best practice.

CREATING BETTER...

Newsletters

The eighth in a series of articles about improving your congregation's printed communications

We've spent considerable time looking at how to make your church newsletters look better. The Director of Communications looks at many church newsletters each month to see what is going on in your congregation. A few general impressions about these newsletters:

- Many newsletters do not use anything but text. They are lacking graphics. Pictures, clip art, or articles in shapes would help tremendously.
- Don't underestimate the importance of white space. Your newsletter should have a balance of text, graphic elements, and white space. White space helps the reader be drawn to the other elements.
- Make sure that your pictures and graphics are not fuzzy. Many copiers are now equipped to print from computers and can aid in everyone getting a "clean" copy.
- Also make sure that people pictured are large enough for us to see them. Their heads should be the size of a nickel, at least.
- Headlines need to be larger than the article text.
- Put news on the front page. While pastor's thoughts are important, do they usually constitute news? Put the pastor's message on page 2 or on one of the last pages.
- Make your newsletter look like some thought was put into it and not just copying news items from other sources.
- Consistency is good. People come to expect to find certain things in their newsletter—so if you put *USS Ark* or *Camel Tracks* in the newsletter, it's a good idea to do that every month.
- The synod office probably misses seeing some church newsletters because they are only produced in electronic form or posted on church websites. If your church only does an electronic version, make sure that news@uss-elca.org is on your mailing list. Or if you just post it, make sure we know so we can keep up with your congregation news.
- We have some very good looking newsletters in our synod. From this editor's humble opinion, one of the best is Beaver Lutheran Church in Beaver Springs. Just so you know, their church secretary used to work for a newspaper doing layout, so there is lots of experience behind their editions. If you get a chance to see their work, it's worth it. The newsletter is crisp, clean, lots of good pictures, and a good mix of text, graphics, and white space.

Hopefully this series on Creating Better Publications helped you enhance your communications. If you would like help applying some of these tips, please contact Chad Hershberger at news@uss-elca.org and he'll do an audit of your newsletter and other publications for you to give you some ideas to improve what you are doing.

In the next edition of Headwaters, we'll take a break from a monthly series. Coming in 2012- a new series titled, "Pastor, meet Peter Jennings."



USS CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

Conference	Dean	Secretary	Meetings
Buffalo Valley	Pastor Jill Seagle pastorjills@windstream.net	Pastor B.J. Collins collins_bj@hotmail.com	Thursday, Nov. 10, Christ's United, Millmont, 9:00 a.m. worship, 10:00 a.m. conference meeting; Thursday, December 1, Christ, Lewisburg.
Juniata Valley	Pastor Gary Roth garoth142@yahoo.com	Pastor James Park Bricker gymbri@embarqmail.com	Tuesday, Nov. 15, 10:00 a.m., Holy Communion, Yeagertown; Tuesday, January 17, Trinity, McAlisterville.
Middle Creek	Pastor Wayne Muthler pwayne@ptd.net	Pastor Patrick Sipes sgtmuddy@gmail.com	Wednesday, Nov. 9, Zion, Kratzerville, 9:30 a.m.
North Branch	Pastor Chad Hebrink pastorchad@verizon.net	Pastor Keith Pittsnogle prkeith@ptd.net	Wednesday, Nov. 23, 9:30 a.m., St. Luke, Bloomsburg; Wed. Dec. 21
Tulpehocken	Pastor Constantine Havir revhavir@yahoo.com	Pastor Rich Fangmann pastorrich@ptd.net	Tuesday, Nov. 8, United, Wolf's Crossroads, 9:00 a.m. pericope study, 10:00 a.m. conference meeting; Tuesday, December 6, Grace, Shamokin.
West Branch	Pastor Gunther Bernhardt prbernhardt@gmail.com	Pastor Maurice Frontz frontz@comcast.net	Tuesday, Nov. 8, 9:00 a.m. worship, 10:00 a.m. conference meeting; Church of the Savior, Williamsport; Tue. Dec. 13.

Seafarer Gift Bag Collection Ends on Thanksgiving

The USS Global Mission Committee is encouraging congregations of this synod to join together in collecting "Christmas-at-Sea" Gift Bags for seafarers this December through the Seafarers and International House (SIH) in New York City (<http://www.sihnyc.org/>). SIH port chaplains in 2010 visited 1,517 ships in port from Providence to Philadelphia, distributing 5,750 gift bags to crewmen of many nationalities. Each gift bag should contain one sweatshirt (L-XL), three pairs of socks, one casual t-shirt (M-L), one knit heavy winter cap, one can of nuts or bar of chocolate, and a personalized Christmas card from you! Sturdy, imprinted plastic bags for this project are available at the synod office in Lewisburg. Filled sacks should be brought to the synod office by November 28 (the Monday after Thanksgiving) so that they may be transported to NYC in time for distributing. Thank you for taking part in this ministry to some of the hardworking, lonely freighter crews who are responsible for 90% of the world's trade via merchant ships.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES	SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Updated October 20, 2011)</i></p> <p>Currently served by Intentional Interim Pastor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Luke, Williamsport • Evangelical, Reedsville • St. John's (Brick) Lutheran Church, Montgomery <p>Interviewing Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethany, Montoursville • Evangelical, Reedsville • St. John's (Brick) Lutheran Church, Montgomery 	<p style="text-align: center;">Synod Staff Lead Worship</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The bishop and 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 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.</i></p> <p>November 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop at Holy Spirit, Turbotville, in AM; at Emmanuel, Williamsport in PM <p>November 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop at St. Matthew, Williamsport <p>November 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop at St. Paul, Allensville • Beth Ann at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove

IN CONCLUSION

A Thanksgiving Litany

Written by Chad Hershberger, November 2006

Leader: Creator God, we raise our voices and say
People: **Thank you for the blessings you give us each day**
Leader: Thank you for the bounties of this land
People: **Which come directly from your hand**
Leader: Thank you for the food on our Thanksgiving table
People: **Prepared by hands that were more than able**
Leader: Thank you for family with bonds like no other
People: **For sister and brother and father and mother**
Leader: Thank you for friends, beside us they walk
People: **And lend us their ears when we need to talk**
Leader: We thank you the most for your only Son
People: **On earth, the victory over death He won**
Leader: O Lord, you are good, your mercy will last
People: **You are the same-- future, present and past**
Leader: So with all generations, our voices we raise
People: **With psalms of thanksgiving we give you our praise**
All: **Amen**



Chad Hershberger is the Director of Communications for the Upper Susquehanna Synod and editor of Headwaters. His reflections "In Conclusion" appear here monthly and are his opinions and thoughts. They do not necessarily reflect the thoughts or opinions of the Upper Susquehanna Synod or its staff.

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