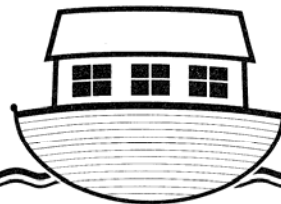


# U.S.S. ARK



Season after  
Epiphany  
2009

God's Work, Our Hands in the Upper Susquehanna Synod + Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***God's Work, Our Hands in the U.S.S.  
News of God's People in Action***

## Many Mission Malls Make More Ministry Manageable

There were a few less gift-wrapped packages under Christmas trees across our synod this past Christmas, and a lot more ministry made possible through alternative gifts purchased through Mission Malls. Instead of unneeded gifts to recipients who already "had everything", many people received beautiful cards indicating that a donation to a worthy charity had been made in their honor by the gift-giver.

The Mission Mall at St. John's, Mifflinville in its fourth year welcomed 150 participants over two Sundays in December. Attendees munched on sandwiches and cookies and browsed booths that helped interpret the many charities from which to choose for alternative gifts. This Mission Mall generated nearly \$12,000 for eighteen charities, local, nationwide, and international. In addition, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans supplemented those gifts for a total forwarded to the charities of over \$16,000!

In its first year, the Mission Mall at First Lutheran Church, Mifflinburg collected nearly \$3,000 for various charities. And the 2008 Mission Mall sponsored by Pine Street, Danville and Washingtonville Lutheran Church raised over \$3,400 for such charities as the Danville Area Food Bank, Teen Pregnancy Coalition, Red Cross, Ronald McDonald House, ELCA Disaster Response, and ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

For suggestions about offering a Mission Mall in your congregation, please contact any of the above churches or the synod's Global Mission Taskforce. +



## U.S.S. Receives Dividend Check

Christopher J. Fellon, of PA Church Insurers, LLC, recently presented Bishop Robert L. Driesen with a check for \$25,804.00 for the synod. This represents the dividend on the policies held with the Brotherhood Mutual group of the Upper Susquehanna Synod in 2008.

A total of \$216,845 has been returned to the U.S.S. by Brotherhood Mutual in the past twelve years. Historically, much of the dividend money, nearly \$190,000, has been used to support Camp Mt. Luther and other synodical ministries.

Mr. Fellon reminds the congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod that the dividends received by the Synod do not result in higher premiums for congregations. Participating in a group makes these dividends possible.

For a no-obligation review and quotation of a congregation's or agency's insurance needs, whether property or liability insurance, contact Christopher Fellon at (570) 286-8566 ext. 137 or cfellon@pachurchins.com. +

# U.S.S. Work Team in Liberia

The U.S.S. shares a companion synod relationship with the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL), where a team of volunteers from the U.S. is now serving in various locations from Jan. 13 to Feb. 26, 2009. Here are some highlights of the USS/ELCA—LCL relationship:



**MONROVIA:** *Capitol City; pop. 1 million plus, and headquarters of the LCL.* Bette McCrandall has been serving as an ELCA Missionary here for more than 30 years. Bette is currently serving as supervisor of the LCL school system.

**TOTOTA:** *Home of Louis T. Bowers Pastoral and Lay Training Center, approx. 100 miles from Monrovia.* U.S.S. Pastor Ronald Shellhamer is completing the final 6 months of a two-year term as a theological instructor at the Center.

**PHEBE HOSPITAL:** *26 miles beyond TOTOTA, former site of several USS work team missions, but not in 2009.*

**LUTHERAN TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (LTI):** *near Salayea in Lofa County, 300+ acre campus.* When the 2008 U.S.S. Work Team left, 10 of the 40 buildings had been renovated. Current work team member Ruth Koble is continuing ESL Tutor Training and staff development at LTI.

**CURRAN HOSPITAL at ZORZOR:** the focus of 2009 USS Work Team composed of Gary and Deb Winters from Lower Susquehanna Synod, U.S.S. members Joe Kanagy and Sandra Nelson, Carl and Barbara Dierksheide from Ohio, and Butch and Jim Foster from Montana.

**U.S.S. ARK** is a publication of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations in the Pennsylvania counties of Mifflin, Juniata, Snyder, Union, Northumberland, Columbia, Montour, Lycoming, Clinton, & Tioga. Permission is granted to reproduce **U.S.S. Ark** for congregational communications.

Send your mission stories and ministry ideas to Pastor Beth Ann Stone at [BethAnn@uss-elca.org](mailto:BethAnn@uss-elca.org).

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The Rev. Robert L. Driesen  
*Bishop*

Deb, Sandra, and Barbara are conducting teacher training workshops, while Gary, Joe, Carl, and Jim are at work on various construction projects around the hospital and St. John's Lutheran Church. Deb, a UCC Pastor, has been invited to teach a one-week course at TOTOTA. Gary will also review his Tuition Scholarship Program. With a nursing doctorate in Public Health, Edna Johnson is a resident ELCA missionary.

**CARGO CONTAINER:** A 40-foot cargo shipping container, loaded in the U.S.S. in November 2008, was scheduled to arrive in Liberia (by ship) by the end of December. Collections are currently suspended for any future containers that may be scheduled. +

## Tour de Revs Gears Up for 100 Day Trip

The Tour de Revs, a unique undertaking by three West Virginia ELCA pastors, will be stopping at the U.S.S. synod office in Lewisburg on June 4. The cyclists will be riding a custom-made triplet bicycle constructed from bamboo as they cross the country on a mission to promote wellness and to do their part to alleviate world hunger. U.S.S. congregations are being challenged to do their part to raise funds for World Hunger in connection with this special event. Check out [www.tourderevs.org](http://www.tourderevs.org) for details! +