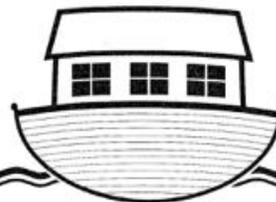


USS ARK

News of God's People in Action



June
2017

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

Updates from our Bavarian Companion Synod



The Ansbach-Wurzburg Partnership Committee has just recently had an update from our Partnership office in Germany. Rev. Dr. Philipp Hauenstein confirmed a date to celebrate our partnership and gave an update on the refugee crisis.

Sunday, June 25, 2017, will be the date to lift up the Kirchenkreis Ansbach-Wurzburg in prayer. This is the Commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession in 1530. On this Sunday, it is suggested that prayers be offered in worship for our brothers and sisters in Christ, their Church Leaders, Pastors, and Bishop Gisela Bornowski. They will pray similarly for the Upper

Susquehanna Synod. The partnership committee also suggests the hymn "Lord Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word" (ELW 517) be used that Sunday.

An update was also given on the refugee crisis in their region. The number of new refugees coming has dropped significantly compared with 2015. In 2015 more than one million people arrived only in Germany. For 2017, officials expect about 200,000 new refugees. From January to April, 60,605 people applied for asylum in Germany officially and out of this number 7,753 applied for asylum in Bavaria. The reason for the dropping number is not that the global problems are solved or closer to a solution. But the reason is that it becomes more difficult to get to Europe. The Balkan route is officially closed. But thousands of women and children are still somewhere lost on this route and living under difficult conditions in one of the camps close to one of the borders on this route.

Most of the refugees are now crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Libya or other North African Countries. So far about 45,000 arrived by boat and more than 5000 drowned. It is expected that the number of refugees using this dangerous route will increase during summer. The European Union and the National Governments have so far not yet found a good way to deal with this situation.

In the Kirchenkreis Ansbach-Wurzburg, the number of new refugees coming has also dropped significantly. Many congregations are very active in organizing language training and general support. The language barrier and the mobility or immobility of people seem to be the biggest problem for integration. Young people have a good chance of getting a job; but, they would need transportation and need to speak and understand German and this is sometimes difficult.

Right now, perhaps because 2017 they have general election in Germany, the tension between the church and the government is increasing and pastors are questioned by the police and other officials. As a church, they are challenged to support integration; to secure humanitarian treatment for those who must leave; to help to build up peace and reconciliation in society among people with different interests; and to fight the true reasons for migration. *Thanks to Rev. Lois Martin for the updates from our companion synod.*

Lay School Scholarships

Available: Gettysburg Seminary's Summer Lay School of Theology is on July 23-29, 2017. The theme is Congregational Renewal for Lay People and the presenter is Deacon Marsha Roscoe who is the Director of the Center for Faith Formation and Resource Ministries of the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Here is the link for the brochure and registration:

http://www.ltsq.edu/images/upload/2017_LaySchoolBrochure_web.pdf

In addition to scholarships from the seminary, those who wish to attend may apply to the synod office for assistance. Send a request to Pastor Craig Miller (prcmiller@uss-elca.org) indicating your need.

Up and Down the Valleys



The Lay Ministry Institute held a reunion in May for those who went through the program over its nearly 20 years. They remembered good times and shared a meal at Mount Luther. Pastor Melody Sell (pictured at left) who serves as the LMI director, gave a history of the institute to those in attendance.

Rev. John Harwood (*Zion, Renovo*) has accepted a call at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Lewistown. His final Sunday was May 28. Harwood is an Episcopal priest who served both Zion Lutheran, Renovo, and Trinity, Episcopal. Trinity closed on Easter Sunday and many of their members are now attending Zion.

The **Buffalo Valley Lutheran Parish** (*Pastor John Yost*) held a community worship service, picnic, and community block party at the Mifflinburg Community Park on May 28. The events were open to the public. The block party featured various games, an open swim, refreshments, and a bounce house.

A celebration commemorating the Reformation took place between Lutherans and Catholics at **Trinity, Milton** (*Interim Pastor James Fladland*) on June 4th. Pastors from three Lutheran churches and St. Joseph's Catholic Church took part. The service featured a joint choir of participating churches.

Protestant Campus Ministry at Bloomsburg University (*Campus Pastor Jill Young*) is moving into new quarters at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in town. PCM had to move as their office space in the Kehr Union Building is becoming Interfaith Office space. The Episcopal Church generously offered space to the ministry and are renovating for this purpose.

Trinity, McAlisterville (*Pastor Erin Bovendam*) is the latest congregation to be featured on the synod's website. Check it out on the home page at uss-elca.org.

Rev. David Pennebaker (*St. Mark's, Alfarata, and St. John, Ridge*) has announced to his congregations his retirement as of June 30.

Beaver, Beaver Springs (*Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity*) celebrated their 50th anniversary with a special worship service on May 7. Several former pastors returned to help with the service which featured beautiful music and Bishop Collins as preacher. Following the service, a catered meal was held with congregation members and pastors reminiscing about past times and future hopes. The day concluded with a video presentation of the groundbreaking for the church building and the first service.

Camp Mount Luther

recently started their summer season as the staff arrived for training. The first annual Circle of Faith Giving Club dinner was held on June 4, with Director Chad Hershberger presenting the first Cloud of Witness Award being presented to Chris Sands, board president. The award recognizes someone who has dedicated their time, talent, and treasure to the camp. Later that evening, a mortgage burning was held to celebrate the paying off of the Evergreen Center loan.



Submit Your Stories! The *USS Ark* publishes stories about ministries throughout the synod. If you know of a ministry that is flourishing, have a resource that others could benefit from, have a question that you'd like answered, or have a call story that you'd like to share, contact us at news@uss-elca.org.

USS ARK is a publication of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA. Permission is granted for congregations to reproduce this newsletter. Send mission stories and ministry ideas by the first of the month to Chad Hershberger, Director of Communications, at news@uss-elca.org.



Upper Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Bishop

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Upper Susquehanna Synod Events Calendar

Registration and Information on the ELCA Youth Gathering

Registration for the ELCA Youth Gathering will open on September 15 and continue until November 15 for the early bird discount. Late fees go into effect on February 15. Volunteer applications for the ELCA Youth Gathering are live and close on July 15. Current high school seniors and older are eligible to apply as volunteer staff. The gathering will be held in Houston, TX, from June 27- July 1, 2018 with MYLE and the tAble being from June 24-27. Congregations should start to identify youth, leaders, and a primary contact person. You can sign up for gathering news at www.elca.org/gathering. Now is also the time to set a budget and begin fundraising efforts. The gathering staff suggests budgeting between \$900-\$1200 to get youth to and from Texas. This includes a range in the cost of hotel rooms of \$99-\$150.

On July 15, financial aid registration will open on the Gathering website. No congregation is too small to send kids. The average size group at the Gathering is 3-7 kids. If you are concerned about not having enough youth, you can also join in with a nearby congregation. More questions? Want more information? Check out www.elca.org/YouthGathering, join the Facebook group USS ELCA Youth Gathering Leaders (for adult leaders only) or contact Charlene Rineer at ckrorange@yahoo.com or 717-880-2872. (Please note the phone number area code was incorrect in last month's USS Ark).

For congregations who do not have youth attending the gathering – consider helping to support other youth of our synod by sponsoring a youth participant from a neighboring congregation. After all – we are church together!

June 20, 2017: Mission Table Meeting

The Upper Susquehanna Synod Mission Table will meet on June 20, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. at the Synod Office. The Mission Table includes members of Small Church and Transformational Ministry Teams. They meet to discuss mission in the synod and to coordinate work of missional committees. Everyone is welcome! Meetings will also be held September 21 and November 27.

June 27, 2017: Mission Support Table Meeting

The Upper Susquehanna Synod Mission Table will meet on June 27, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at Holy Spirit, Turbotville. The Mission Support Table includes members of the Stewardship and Mission Interpreters Teams. They meet to discuss support for mission in the synod and to the ELCA. Everyone is welcome! A meeting will also be held on November 29.

July 8, 2017: Mission Strategy Table Meeting

The Upper Susquehanna Synod Mission Table will meet on July 8, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. at the Synod Office. The Mission Strategy Table includes members of the Mission Table and Mission Support Table. They meet to develop strategy for mission in the synod and to propose implementation actions. Everyone is welcome! Meetings will also be held October 14 and January 13.

July 16, 2017: Celebrate Christmas in July at Camp!

The Camp Mount Luther Staff invites everyone to attend their Campfire and Worship Service celebrating Christmas in July on July 16, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. The program will be held outdoors, weather permitting, so bring a lawn chair. In addition, there will be a Christmas carol sing either as part of worship or just after worship is over. There is no need to RSVP. Just show up ready to celebrate our savior's birth at camp in the middle of the summer!

July 22, 2017: USSWO Convention

The Upper Susquehanna Synodical Women's Organization Annual Convention will be held on Saturday, July 22, 2017, at the Evergreen Center at Camp Mount Luther, 355 Mt. Luther Lane, Mifflinburg. Women are asked to be present for this one-day convention as it brings an excellent opportunity for you to meet

your sisters from neighboring churches and become informed about the workings of the Women of the ELCA. The theme for this year's convention is "All Anew—Renewal of Spirit and Hope." Churchwide Representative Dawn Smith will speak about the ministries of the Women of the ELCA and Sandy Nelson will speak about her recent trip to Liberia. The Bible study leader will be Jodi Ellis and worship will be led by Bishop Collins and Peggy Bohart. Registration forms are available at <http://www.uss-elca.org/upper-susquehanna-synodical-womens-organization/>

July 23-29, 2017: Summer Lay School of Theology at Gettysburg

Gettysburg Seminary's Summer Lay School of Theology is on July 23-29, 2017. The theme is Congregational Renewal for Lay People and the presenter is Deacon Marsha Roscoe who is the Director of the Center for Faith Formation and Resource Ministries of the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Here is the link for the brochure and registration: http://www.ltsq.edu/images/upload/2017_LaySchoolBrochure_web.pdf In addition to scholarships from the seminary, those who wish to attend may apply to the synod office for assistance. Send a request to Pastor Craig Miller (prcmiller@uss-elca.org) indicating your need.

September 2, 2017: Dandelion Trail Run at CML

Camp Mount Luther in Mifflinburg will be holding a 5 and 10 Kilometer trail run race at the camp Labor Day Weekend. This is the fifteenth year for the event at the camp, located five miles west of Mifflinburg. This will be an entry-level trail race on Mount Luther grounds with proceeds going to the camp. It is being organized by Joel and Shelley Heasley of Middleburg. The Dandelion Run was named in honor and memory of Rev. Glenn E. Heasley, Jr., former Assistant to the Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Glenn's favorite "flower" was the dandelion. The date of the race is Saturday, September 2, 2017. The start time for the race is 9:00 a.m. Runners decide on race day if they want to do a 5k or 10K (a double loop of the 5K) run. Age group awards will be presented and pre-registered participants will receive a drawstring sports pack. (A limited number will also be available on race day.) Price for entry is \$20 if you pre-register before August 12th. Race day registration is \$25. Registration opens at 7:30 a.m. on race day. Spectators are welcome as well. A kid's fun run (registration for that is one dollar) and a one-mile fun walk will also be held. The same registration fees and amenities apply for the fun walk which will take place on a dirt road. Awards will be given for overall male and female race time, three awards for each age group and an overall master's for male and female in both the 5K and the 10K. The awards ceremony will be immediately following the race. All miles for the course will be marked and there is one water stop on the course. Timing will be electronically done. To download a registration form, visit <http://midpentrailblazers.com/trail-race-events/dandelion-run/dandelion-run-application.pdf> or you can contact Joel Heasley at 570-765-0267. Shower facilities are available after the race. All proceeds from this event will benefit the camp's general operating fund.

ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES: Have you signed up for your fall Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend? Both of our spring Weekends had waiting lists, so sign up **now** for a fall Weekend to avoid disappointment! Couples overwhelmingly report that the Weekend is the best thing they have ever done for their marriage. The fall Weekends are:

- **September 15-17, 2017** at Spruce Lake Retreat Center, Canadensis, PA, a new hotel-style facility on Spruce Lake in the heart of the Pocono Mountains – an hour north of Allentown.
- **October 6-8, 2017** at the Black Swan Inn in Lee, Massachusetts. Nestled in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, a hidden gem overlooking Laurel Lake – an hour north of Hartford, CT.

Two nights lodging, 5 meals for each of you, and all supplies are included with your \$100 per couple registration fee, plus toward the end of the weekend you will be given an opportunity to make a confidential contribution of whatever amount you wish toward the continuation of the program. Registrations are limited, so sign up today by going to the website: www.Godlovesmarriage.org and paying the registration with your credit card, or marking the option to mail a check. For questions, or if you would like a brochure with registration form mailed to you, contact Northeast US Directors of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, Fred & Julie Schamber, at fjschamber@comcast.net or 724-325-3166.

October 15-20, 2017: Children, Youth & Family Ministry Certification School.

Vibrant Faith (www.vibrantfaith.org) is a great ministry that has been at work for many years building up the church through leadership development and research. Bear Creek Camp (BCC) near Wilkes-Barre is hosting Vibrant Faith's 75th certification school in October. The CYF Training School changes lives, equips leaders and helps transform ministries in effective and creative faith formation. It's a 9-month program for the participants that begins with five days of group training at BCC and continues with one-on-one training via phone, blogs, videos, and webinars. Youth leaders, pastors, volunteers, other interested adults are the perfect folks who could benefit from a program like this. It's typically a \$2,000 fee, but, the camp is offering the program for \$1,600. To sign up or get more information visit

www.bearcreekcamp.org/vibrant-faith-training-school/

October 22-23, 2017: LARC Vespers and Day of Dialogue

Save the Date. Our annual Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic (LARC) Vespers will be on Sunday, October 22, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. at the United Lutheran Seminary (Gettysburg Campus) Chapel. The LARC Day of Dialogue will be Monday, October 23, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Cardinal Keeler Center. The events will take special note of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation as well as our progress on the path to Christian Unity. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop Emeritus Donald J. McCoid, who as Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) had a key role in developing the document Declaration on the Way, will be the speaker for the Day of Dialogue.