NEWS, PRAYERS, AND LINKS

- Now is the time to register for this year’s Synod Assembly. The registration mailing has been sent from the synod office. **The 2017 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly** will take place at Weber Chapel on the campus of Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, on June 16-17, 2017. Register before April 15 for a $10 discount on registration! This year’s theme is “Together in Mission: Relating and Reforming.” Guest speakers and musicians from the ELCA’s Global Mission Team will be with us, including Sunitha Mortha as our ELCA Churchwide representative. Remember, we are striving to go paperless this year with the bulletin of reports so materials will be available for download at [www.uss-elca.org/assembly](http://www.uss-elca.org/assembly).

- Prayers for Dawn Doll, Pastor Josh Reinsburrow and his family and Pastor Gary Owens.

- Looking for some Holy Week and Easter communications resources? Check out [http://tinyurl.com/mgjhtpf](http://tinyurl.com/mgjhtpf)

MILESTONES

- Synod Council extended a call to Pastor Sarah Hershberger to serve as an intentional interim pastor at Grace, Shamokin and St. Paul’s, Gowen City.

- With thanks to God for their ministry, we celebrate with these children of God the anniversaries of their ordination or consecration (note: anniversary years listed are in multiples of five only):

  - **15 years**: Barbara J Collins (Bishop) 3/23/2002

NEWS FROM PORTICO

- Together with their partner, Ernst & Young, Portico is holding a day long pre-retirement seminar. They will cover all phases of retirement planning in simple, understandable terms — from establishing a retirement budget, to discussing investment strategies, to reviewing health care options. And, we leave plenty of time to address your retirement questions. The event will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 2221 N. Oak Lane, State College, PA, on Wednesday, May 17, 2017. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and runs until 6:00 p.m. Register at [https://myportico.porticobenefits.org/NewsEvents/Events/Pre-RetirementSeminars](https://myportico.porticobenefits.org/NewsEvents/Events/Pre-RetirementSeminars). Once registered, you’ll receive an invoice for $35 per person. Please make your check payable to Portico Benefit Services and mail the check or bring it to the seminar.

- **Have you taken your health assessment yet?** Thanks to two straight years of excellent health assessment participation, the 1% discount on health rates was already included in this year’s costs to your sponsoring organization. Do your part: [Sign in to myPortico](https://myportico.porticobenefits.org/Signin) and take your health assessment today.

- If you have ELCA-Primary health coverage, follow these three steps to earn up to $400 wellness dollars by completing Portico’s Live Well Challenge. Find everything you need to get started at [PorticoBenefits.org/livewell](http://PorticoBenefits.org/livewell)

  1. Take stock of your physical and emotional health via the health assessment ($100 wellness dollars)
  2. Take stock of your retirement readiness via Portico’s Retirement Planning Tool; at the end of step 4 in the tool, you can either implement changes or save the plan for future consideration to earn your wellness dollars ($200)
  3. Identify and work towards a positive lifestyle change, and report your progress on myPortico ($100)
Currently served by Intentional Interim Pastor
- Pine Street, Danville
- Grace, Shamokin and St. Paul’s, Gowen City
- St. Mark’s, Williamsport

Currently Served by Interim Pastor
- Christ, Buckhorn/St. Paul, Danville
- Christ White/Christ Brick (Hassinger’s Parish)
- Faith, Richfield
- Grace, Point Township
- Messiah, Mifflintown
- St. James, Jersey Shore
- St. John, Leck Kill
- St. Luke, Sunbury
- St. Peter, Kreamer
- Trinity, Oak Grove
- Trinity, Point Township
- Trinity, Shamokin
- Zion, Herndon

Served by Interim and Seeking Candidates
- Christ & Trinity, Milton (Milton Lutheran Parish)
- Christ United, Catawissa, and St. Peter, Grovania
- Holy Spirit, Turbotville
- Salem, Selinsgrove
- St. John, Belleville
- St. Luke, Bloomsburg

Served by Interim/Preparing Ministry Profiles
- Messiah, Mifflintown
- United In Christ, West Milton (first call)
- St. John’s, Lewistown

United Lutheran Seminary is hiring for an Associate Director of Admissions on the Gettysburg Campus. Click here for a job description. Salary is low 50’s plus full benefits packet. For more information, contact Elizabeth Meighan at emeighan@ltsg.edu or 717-338-3001.

Conference Meetings

Buffalo Valley: Apr. 6, 9:00 a.m., Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village and Apr. 27, Noon, Lewisburg Hotel

Juniata Valley: Sept. 21, 10:00 a.m., Place TBA

Middle Creek: Apr. 19, 10:00 a.m., Beaver, Beaver Springs

North Branch: Apr. 26, 9:30 a.m., St. Luke, Bloomsburg

Tulpehocken: Apr. 4, 10:00 a.m., Himmel’s, Re buck

West Branch: May 9, 9:30 a.m., Messiah, S. Williamsport

Upper Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PO Box 36
Lewisburg, PA 17837
Phone: 570-524-9778
Fax: 570-524-9757
Web: www.uss-elca.org

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
(Updated February 21, 2017)

Conference Deans
Rev. William Henderson, Buffalo Valley pastor.celc@gmail.com
Rev. James Park Bricker, Juniata Valley gymbri@embarqmail.com
Rev. Robert Doll, Middle Creek prdoll2@gmail.com
Rev. John Koons, North Branch revjrk@hotmail.com
Rev. Richard Fangman, Tulpehocken pastorrch@ptd.net
Rev. Kerry Aucker, West Branch kaucker1@comcast.net

SYNOD STAFF
Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Bishop BpCollins@uss-elsa.org
Rev. Craig Miller, Assistant to the Bishop/Director of Evangelical Mission pcrmiller@uss-elca.org
Brenda Krouse, Office Manager Brenda@uss-elca.org
Chad Hershberger, Director of Communications news@uss-elca.org

The bishop and assistant like to make Sunday visits and during other congregational events. Here is the schedule:

March 26: Bishop at St. John, Unityville (AM) and Pastor David Byerly installation at 3:00 p.m.
April 2: Bishop in Upstate NY; Pastor Miller at St. Luke, Sunbury
April 9: Bishop at St. Marks, Alfarata and St. Johns, Oak Grove
April 23: Bishop at Trinity, McClure
April 30: Bishop at Zion, Renovo
Deadline Approaching for a Special Offer
The ELCA stewardship team offered a StewardCast on March 4 with presentations by
- Bishop Andy Taylor, Pacifica Synod
- Rev. Taryn Montgomery, WND Synod
- Rev. Greg Meyer, Minneapolis Synod
- Mr. Richard Bauer, Vanco
- Rev. Melissa Wagner, Oregon Synod
- Ms. Linda Staats, Grand Canyon Synod
You can view the webcast at www.elca.org/stewardship. Please note the SPECIAL OFFER made by Vanco Payment Solutions during the webcast. Similar to the pilot conducted in 2014-2015, Vanco is willing to waive the Start up Fee ($100) and Monthly Fee for twelve months of the Start Plan ($120) for any and every congregation to sign up for Vanco services by Friday, March 31, 2017. This applies only to congregations not currently using any Vanco services. This means more than 5,500 ELCA congregations and new starts are eligible for a savings of $220 in the first year. Participating in this offer will enable congregations to take advantage of online and mobile giving by credit or debit card in time for this Easter Week. This will include giving on Apple and Android phones. Simply contact 800-675-7430. Please feel free to share this offer with your congregations. If you have questions, please contact Richard Bauer at 612-759-3904.

Information on the ELCA Youth Gathering
Now is the time to start planning for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, TX. 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. In May, volunteer applications will go live and close on July 15. Current high school seniors and older are eligible to apply as volunteer staff. Charlene Rineer, our synod’s Gathering Coordinator, will be presenting workshops at Synod Assembly to share more details. 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.

April 5, 2017: GROW Writer's Retreat
Anyone wishing to come and write devotions for Camp Mount Luther’s First Light Digital Devotions is welcome to join other writers on April 5, 2017. The retreat will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Evergreen Center. It will be a day of writing and sharing resources for devotional writing. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to the camp office at cml@campmountluther.org or 570-922-1587 before April 1, 2017.

April 5, 2017: Institute for Lifelong Learning Program
Susquehanna University's Institute for Lifelong Learning is a series of programs designed for senior community members. Members gather in SU’s Campus Center on Wednesday to enjoy a social hour, presentation, and lunch, beginning at 10:15 a.m. There are three options for membership in the institute. For further details, please contact Joe Herb at kapajoe@ptd.net or 570-374-9911 or Jayme Long at longj@susqu.edu or 570-372-4354.

April 5 Program: Dr. Philip Mackowiak, author of Diagnosing Giants; Professor and Vice Chairman of the Department of Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine: "Beethoven and the Sound That Failed."
**April 6, 2017 and April 9, 2017: Future Directions Meeting for Mount Luther**
The Camp Mount Luther Board of Directors has begun a process to look forward to the future of the synod’s outdoor ministry and to build a vision and ministry plan to serve children, families, congregations and our greater community for generations to come. The board is holding several “cabin meetings” in various areas of the synod to talk about opportunities, challenges, and a new vision for Camp Mount Luther. At those meetings, the process will be outlined, questions will be answered, and the opportunity will be given for folks to fill out a survey to help the board as they plan for the future. Your advice and counsel are vital to the camp ministry’s future. Please plan to attend and give your input. Meetings will be held April 6 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Bloomsburg; April 9 at 1:00 p.m. at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lewistown; and April 23 at 4:00 p.m. at Camp Mount Luther, Mifflinburg.

**April 11, 2017: Chrism Mass**
The annual Chrism Mass with Renewal of Ministry Vows will take place on the Tuesday of Holy Week, April 11, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. It will be held at Trinity, Hughesville. Lunch will be provided after the service. **Please reserve your place for lunch by contacting the synod office by April 6.** Whereas all are welcome to participate in this service, Pastors, Deacons, and Authorized Lay Worship Leaders are especially invited to renew vows and recommit to worship leadership. The service will include the blessing of oil, which will be available to rostered leaders to take with them following lunch.

**April 22, 2017: Lutheran Youth Day**
Bring your youth group to Susquehanna University for Lutheran Youth Day, where we will find new ways to rise up in service to our community. Bishop Barbara J. Collins will participate in the day’s activities, including service projects with LutheranHands, faith formation fun, community building, worship at the end of the afternoon, and music by Dave Scherer from AGAPE*. Scherer will be there throughout the day providing music at the large group sessions and the concluding concert. He has inspired youth from Brooklyn to Bosnia with his relational ministry “Hip Hop Outreach.” Combining rapping, dancing, storytelling and his fluency in Spanish, AGAPE* connects with his listeners in a way that they really “Get it”. His energy is contagious, and his stories of faith transcend differences. The cost is only $10 per person, which includes lunch and the concert. (What a deal! But if that sum would prevent any of your youth from participating, please contact the chaplain’s office. They can reduce or waive the fee for youth with financial need.) Also, the SU’s Lutheran Student Movement is selling t-shirts for the day. The shirts MUST be pre-ordered. Shirts will not be for sale that day. Registration is from 9:00-9:45 a.m. in Horn Lobby of Weber Chapel with the opening session at 10 a.m. The event ends at 5:30 p.m. All large group gatherings are in SU’s Stretansky Hall. Contact the SU Chaplain’s office with any questions. (musser@susqu.edu or 570-372-4303). Registration and T-shirt orders must be submitted by April 7.

To download a registration/T-shirt order form, click here: [https://www.uss-elca.org/?attachment_id=10399](https://www.uss-elca.org/?attachment_id=10399)

**April 23, 2016: Camp Mount Luther Spring Open House and Future Directions Meeting**
Have you ever wanted to see Mount Luther’s site and facilities? Do you miss camp and want to visit in the springtime? Are you interested in coming to camp this summer but want to get more information and see the place first? Well, this is your chance. The Camp Mount Luther Spring Open House will be held on Sunday, April 23, 2017, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. You can ask questions, tour camp, and see what it’s like to be a camper! First time campers who are not yet registered for the summer and who attend the event can get a $25 discount on their summer registration! More details will be shared on their website at [www.campmountluther.org](http://www.campmountluther.org)

Following the Open House (at 4:00 p.m.), there will be a future directions meeting at the camp. The Camp Mount Luther Board of Directors has begun a process to look forward to the future of the synod’s outdoor ministry and to build a vision and ministry plan to serve children, families, congregations and our greater community for generations to come. The board is holding several “cabin meetings” in various
areas of the synod to talk about opportunities, challenges, and a new vision for Camp Mount Luther. At those meetings, the process will be outlined, questions will be answered, and the opportunity will be given for folks to fill out a survey to help the board as they plan for the future. Your advice and counsel are vital to the camp ministry’s future. Please plan to attend and give your input.

**April 24-28, 2017: Gettysburg Seminary Spring Academy**
The year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation calls for a new examination of the church’s mission and task in the world. This Spring Academy, under the theme “Re-Formation is Local” brings the question home to each believer and congregation. What is our mission and task in this world, right here? Our “Re-formation” is in our own hands; we have what we need right here and now to follow God’s call to us in this place. The week will offer everything from biblical vision to practical work sessions on the neighbor and what the Gospel means to those nearby sojourners. Preaching Perspectives, a Croquet Tournament, and great food and fellowship are also part of the week. Check this page often: www.ltsg.edu/springacademy as schedule, registration and presenters’ details are soon posted. Wednesday evening worship will recognize the years of the seminary being LTSG with Michael Cooper-White preaching.

**April 25-27, 2017: Generosity NOW**
Generosity NOW—formerly the North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy—has been a premiere Ecumenical Stewardship Center event for decades. Laypersons, pastors, and judicatory and denominational staff who attend Generosity NOW increase their knowledge about spiritual principles and best practices relating to faithful stewardship and generous giving through plenary sessions, workshops, and worship. This year’s Generosity NOW plenary speakers reside in Washington, DC and are from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary, and the Faith and Money Network. Along with these excellent plenary sessions, attendees will choose from 18 different workshops from three tracks: Faithful Stewardship, Leadership, and Generous Giving. If interested in registering, contact Pastor Craig Miller at the synod office as he has some funding available. Registration fees include:

- a pre-conference reception at the Hilton Garden Inn Reagan National Airport on Tuesday evening, April 25
- lunch on Wednesday, April 26 and Thursday, April 27 at the conference site

Registration closes on Tuesday, April 18, the Tuesday after Easter. Register today! Visit https://stewardshipresources.org/generosity-now for information about schedule, leadership, location, lodging, transportation, and registration.

**April 29, 2017: Food Packaging Event**
St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, Williamsport, will be hosting a meal packaging project on Saturday, April 29, from 10:00 a.m. – noon or possibly longer. Their goal is to package 20,000 pasta and tomato basil meals that will be donated to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and area food pantries. These highly nutritious soy-fortified meals have a shelf life of two years and cost 25 cents each to produce. Their goal is to raise $5,000. If they raise more, then they can package additional meals. The counties the northern Central Pennsylvania Food Bank serves are counties of high food insecurity. The term food insecurity means children come home from school with little or no food in the house. One in four children in Clinton County are food insecure. Lycoming County is slightly better. While we cannot solve all the causes of hunger, packaging a meal and giving something nutritious to a family is a physical act to serve our neighbor. The Outreach committee of St. Mark’s Lutheran invites you to participate. They will need volunteers on Saturday, April 29. Please contact the following for more information.

Michele Owen, 570-323-4619, mowen@stmarkswilliamsport.org, St. Marks Youth & Family Ministry
Becky Miller Pryor, 570-971-4585, murphy173@verizon.net, St. Marks Outreach Chairperson

Donations to cover the meals can be made out to St. Mark’s Lutheran or “Outreach, Inc.” and given to either Michele or Becky or mail to St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 142 Market Street, Williamsport PA 17701.
May 3-5, 2017: Bishop’s Retreat
Mark your calendar now – The annual bishop’s retreat will be held on May 3-5 at Camp Hebron, Halifax PA. The focus of the retreat will be: Relationship with God. Relationship with each other. Relationship with the world. Cost for the two and a half days, meals included, is $115/person for double occupancy and $225/person for single occupancy. Space is limited. Registration and more information were mailed out. Spouses are invited to attend this event.

May 8, 2017: Bishop's Open Golf Classic
The annual Bishop Open's Golf Classic is set for May 8, 2017, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at the Susquehanna Valley Country Club in Shamokin Dam. The tournament benefits Camp Mount Luther and the camp’s annual fund. A flyer/bulletin insert containing information and registration form is available here: http://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-Golf-Tournament-Flyer.pdf. The camp’s golf tournament committee is currently looking for hole sponsors, door prize sponsors, silent auction items, and golfers. If you can help, please contact the camp office at 570-922-1587 or cml@campmountluther.org. Congregations are also encouraged to become hole sponsors. Get involved and help our synod’s outdoor ministry!

May 20, 2017: CML Spring Work Day and Youth GROW in the Son
Practice stewardship through service at Camp Mount Luther at their Annual Spring Work Day on Saturday, May 20, 2017, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. They need your help getting the camp grounds and facilities ready for summer. There will be plenty to do and everyone in the family can help! Please bring supplies to do cleaning, mulching, raking, and light construction projects such as step ladders, buckets, rakes, etc. A light lunch will be served. RSVP by May 12 if staying for lunch to cml@campmountluther.org or 570-922-1587.

NEW THIS YEAR! We are inviting youth to stay overnight on Friday night, May 19, through Saturday afternoon. We call it GROW In the Son and we’ll have a short campfire program, complete with S’mores, you’ll sleep in the cabins, help with our work day, and then we’ll have GROW Time for you after lunch. The GROW Time will be a chance to reflect on how God calls us to serve one another! We will finish around 3:00 p.m. Cost for GROW in the Son is $20. You must register by May 12, 2017, by e-mailing cml@campmountluther.org or calling 570-922-1587. We ask that each registered youth group provide one adult (21 or over) for every seven youth and at least one adult for each gender represented. To download a bulletin insert/flyer for both events, click here: http://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2017-Work-Day-Flyer.pdf

May 22, 2017: Lutheran Day at the Capital
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in PA will hold their annual event on May 22 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill. We mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in a time of great upheaval and division at home and around the globe. On May 22, we gather to consider how the Holy Spirit is re-forming us as the Word of God continues to change and renew the world. How can we be Church Together, for the sake of the world, in Pennsylvania? Bring your faith to the table, and join advocates from across the Commonwealth for a day of worship, learning and inspiration to ground and deepen your call to faith-rooted advocacy. The day will feature a keynote address by Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Professor of Theological and Social Ethics, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University, legislative briefing and visit training, issues and faith formation workshops, a continental breakfast, lunch and special advocacy celebration. Come to be inspired, prepared and equipped to act on issues that matter. Bring a team from your congregation, or partners from other traditions in your community. You don’t have to be Lutheran to benefit from the issues and advocacy training! Most other bodies do not have their own state advocacy offices, and many would appreciate this opportunity. To learn more and register, click here: http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event;jsessionid=17463E35FB25ECEAF7D5944045D62165.worker_registrant?llr=lvflt5dab&oeidk=a07edukmq05a668eb65
June 16-17, 2017: Synod Assembly
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