Fifth Edition of “God’s work. Our hands.” Day

Editor’s Note: The following are reports we received of congregations who held service projects as part of the ELCA’s Day of Service in September.

On Sunday, September 10, St. Peter’s, Kreamer (Interim Pastor Vickie Brown) showed God’s Work in the community as they held their Fall Festival. The festival included free games and prizes, fire truck rides from the Kreamer fire department, a tour of the Kreamer ambulance, as well as a cake walk where more than 45 cakes were given away! All the money collected from the food stand was donated equally between the Meals for Seals and the Meals for Mustang programs. Around 100 people participated.

Himmel’s, Dornsife (Pastor Jane Compton) declare they have again outdone themselves doing God’s Work! Following a meal prepared by some of their fabulous cooks, there was lots of chatter and laughter around the church as participants knotted blankets, sorted Angel’s Closet clothing and filled shoe boxes and school bags. There was an awesome group picking-up trash along Schwaben Creek Road. Their youth also did yard work for two families. Members delivered meals to shut-ins, a needy family, and Haven Ministries; visits were also made to two members.

God’s Love and Cookies

Reporting by Harry Deitz

As part of “God’s work, Our hands” Sunday, parishioners of Grace, Shamokin (Pastor Sarah Hershberger) greeted the people who stopped in front of CVS Pharmacy. Passersby had the opportunity to also taste a variety of cookies, baked or purchased by the parishioners, to offer a simple reminder that God’s love is often spoken best through the little things in life such as baked goods.

The idea for the unusual evangelistic project was conceived by Pastor Hershberger. In her monthly newsletter article, she told the congregation she had a “crazy idea.” “First, I’m going to bake a couple batches of cookies,” she wrote. “Second, I’m going to make a sign that says something about God’s love for you. And then after church on Sunday, I’m going to take these items out of my car. I’m going to set up a table somewhere here in Shamokin where there’s foot traffic and offer cookies to passersby and tell them they are loved by a loving God. And that’s it.”

The idea caught on. On Sunday after services at St. Paul’s, Gowen City, and Grace, she had enough freshly baked cookies to fill the back seat of her car and then some. She was joined by several the parishioners handing out the “goodies” to many of the folks who visited downtown Shamokin.

The congregations did a similar event on October 1st as part of a public “blessing of the pets” service.
Synod Pastor Becomes U.S. Citizen

Pastor Carla Volland (Evangelical, Reedsville), became one of America's newest citizens on August 4, 2017. She took her Oath of Allegiance during the naturalization ceremony at the Department of Homeland Security in Philadelphia. The week prior, she took a civics test. Volland said, "I learned about the history and geography of the country and set-up of the U.S. government. There were 100 questions I prepared for and they asked me ten. Prior to the interview test, I was told that the interviews last between 45 minutes and two hours. I had to submit an 18-page application as well. Even though I am now an American, I still have my German accent!"

Pastor Volland’s congregation celebrated this achievement with her the following Sunday by wearing red, white, and blue and waving small American flags while singing "God Bless America." The celebration continued after the morning worship service with the viewing of photos from the oath ceremony. Parishioners also decorated her house as well as the Fellowship Hall and the welcome sign in front of the church. She was presented with a red, white, and blue stole, and everyone enjoyed a patriotic-themed cake during fellowship time after church. This celebration coincidentally occurred on the same day that they blessed 40 quilts made for Lutheran World Relief and three quilts presented to recent high school graduates.

Up and Down the Valleys

Another semester is underway with Protestant Campus Ministry at Bloomsburg University! Campus Pastor Jill Young and her students are settling into their new office at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, just two blocks down from Carver Hall. The church offered space after the ministry lost their on-campus office.

St. James, Muncy (Pastor Bev Cotner) is our latest congregation to be featured on our website. Check our homepage at uss-elca.org for our Featured Congregation.

Port Royal Lutheran Church (Pastor Charles Hershberger), once again hosted a food stand at the annual Juniata County Fair in early September. The fair stand is held in a building at the fairgrounds owned by the church since 1953. All proceeds from sales go to charities. It is located on Lutheran Lane!

The Upper Susquehanna Synodical Women held their convention in July at Camp Mount Luther. Jodi Ellis presented a Bible study and Sandy Nelson held a workshop on her travels in Liberia. Bishop Barbara J. Collins presided at the worship service with Peggy Bohart assisting her. Churchwide Representative Dawn Smith installed the officers for the coming year: Jean Crumb, President; Peggy Bohart, Vice President; Robin Latsha, Secretary; Wendy Zajac, Treasurer; Board Members: Kathy Whitesel, Doris Mertz, Linda Leister, Anne Spicer, Janet Dietrich, and Carol Winter.

Clergy Notes: Rev. Lois Martin has resigned as intentional interim pastor of Pine Street, Danville. Synod Council extended a call to the Rev. Mark Galbraith as Intentional Interim Pastor at the Milton Parish for a one-year term beginning November 1, 2017. Rev. Jerri Carlin has been called to serve St. John’s, Lewistown. She begins October 16, 2017, and will be installed at 2:00 p.m. on November 12.
REFORMATION CELEBRATION STORIES AND PICTURES WANTED!!!
Let us know what your congregation is doing/did for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation! We’d like to feature your stories and pictures of these observances in next month’s USS Ark. Please email pictures and stories to news@uss-ecla.org or tag the Upper Susquehanna Synod on Facebook so we can get your stories and pictures that way!

Musician Wanted
St. John, Unityville, is looking for a pianist/organist to play for Sunday worship and at special services. Anyone interested should contact Robert Gordner (570) 458-5237, Joanne Mosteller (570) 854-9288, Gail Lutz (570) 458-4360, or Pastor Ron Montgomery (570) 584-4465.

Getting Ready Material for ELCA Youth Gathering Now Available
The Getting Ready Material is now available and on the Gathering website for youth leaders to download. The web address is www.elca.org/gathering where you can also sign up for gathering news. Registration for the ELCA Youth Gathering opens on September 15 and continue until November 15 for the early bird discount. Late fees go into effect on February 15. The gathering will be held in Houston, TX, from June 27- July 1, 2018, with MYLE and the tAble being from June 24-27. Now is 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 opened on the Gathering website. No congregation is too small to send kids. 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! 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.

Need to Refinance? The Mission Investment Fund is offering a 3.875% APY rate
If your congregation or ministry is looking to refinance an existing loan, this may be the time to proceed. The Mission Investment Fund (MIF), the ELCA’s lending ministry, is offering a 3.875% APY (Annual Percentage Yield) rate, available through October 31, 2017, on a Five-Year Adjustable-Rate Mortgage. In addition to refinancing existing debt, MIF loans are available for a variety of capital projects—from new construction to additions and renovations, as well as land and building purchases. Adjustable- and Fixed-Rate loan options are available. For information on MIF ministry loans and investment opportunities, visit www.mif.elca.org, contact MIF Customer Service at 877-886-3522, or contact your MIF Regional Manager, Gerry Lauro, at 312-805-6502 or Gerry.lauro@elca.org.

October 20, 2017: Concert at Bucknell University
"Reformation 2017: Reform/Revolt," featuring J.S. Bach's Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80; and songs of revolution and reform from across the globe, will be in October at Bucknell University. The concert is October 20 at the Weis Center starting at 6:30 p.m. with a pre-concert lecture and the actual concert starting at 7:30 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

October 21, 2017: WELCA Action Day
The Mission Action Committee of the Women of the ELCA, Upper Susquehanna Synod, announces its Action Day at the Synod Office. Action Day will be Saturday, October 21st, at 11:00 a.m. The topic is "Caring for Your Congregation and Your Neighbors. Speaker will be Ryan Versulus, discussing Stephen Ministry. He was involved in the Stephen Ministry program at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Hamlin, N.Y. where he trained two classes of new ministers and supervised active Stephen Ministers. He moved to
Danville, PA, in 2013 to help his wife care for her parents and joined Pine Street Lutheran Church. There he restarted a Stephen Ministry program and trained new Stephen Ministers and is recruiting new members. He, with his wife, had served in a hospice home and Ryan serves two days a week as a hospital volunteer chaplain at Geisinger Medical Center. The Day of Advocacy program is free. They will be collecting a free-will offering. The day promises to be exciting! Bring a packed lunch, dessert and beverages will be provided.

**October 22-23, 2017: LARC Vespers and Day of Dialogue**
Bishop Barbara J. Collins invites you to celebrate our Ecumenical relationships with the Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic (LARC) dialog with the LARC Vespers on Sunday, October 22, 2017, at the United Lutheran Seminary (Gettysburg Campus) Chapel. The liturgy for the evening will follow the order used at Lund, Sweden, to celebrate the ecumenical strides made between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. Worship begins at 4:00 p.m. and will be followed by refreshments in the seminary refectory. 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. A registration form is available here: [http://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-LARC-Registration-form.pdf](http://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-LARC-Registration-form.pdf)

**October 29, 2017: Community Reformation Service**
All are invited to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation at the Liberty Community Reformation Service. The service is being held by several churches including the Liberty Lutheran Parish and other denominations in the Liberty area. It will take place on Sunday, October 29, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. in the Liberty High School Auditorium in Liberty. Following worship, there will be food and fellowship.

**October 31, 2017: Looking Back and Called Forward—ELCA 500**
All are welcomed to register and attend “Looking Back & Called Forward: ELCA500” the ELCA’s Reformation anniversary commemoration event on October 31 in Washington, D.C. As a member of a surrounding area synod and congregation, you are invited to join us for this once-in-a-lifetime event. The day’s event will include speakers and a service, held at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation on Capitol Hill. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will co-host and will be joined by co-hosts Indiana-Kentucky Synod Bishop Bill Gafkjen, ELCA Vice President Bill Horne and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Bishop Richard Graham. Registration is free, however, you will be responsible for your own travel and accommodations. Lunch is included in your registration. Visit [https://community.elca.org/elca-reformation-anniversary-event](https://community.elca.org/elca-reformation-anniversary-event) to reserve your seat. For those unable to attend in person, you may watch the event online at [elca.org/livestream](http://elca.org/livestream).

**November 3, 2017: Evening at Shade Mountain to Benefit Mount Luther**
Come to Shade Mountain Winery to share fellowship, entertainment, and enjoy locally produced wine, all to benefit Camp Mount Luther. The event runs from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by Bernie Rich, a local musician who sings contemporary folk music and Christian anthems. The menu will include heavy appetizers, dessert, and one glass of wine per person. SPACE IS LIMITED. Please make your reservations with the camp office at 570-922-1587 or [cml@campmountluther.org](mailto:cml@campmountluther.org). If you choose to purchase any bottles of wine that evening, a portion of the proceeds will be given to Mount Luther. We ask all participants to make a donation to the camp that evening, equal or greater to the food and entertainment provided. Download a flyer/bulletin insert here: [https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-Shade-Mountain-Winery-Flyer.pdf](https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-Shade-Mountain-Winery-Flyer.pdf)

**November 4, 2017: Healthy Congregations Workshop**
On Saturday, November 4, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., there will be a workshop held titled, “Healthy Congregations 2." The workshop will focus on dealing with anxiety in your congregation. The
event will be held at St. John Lutheran Church, 229 South Broad Street, Jersey Shore. It’s designed for any member of a congregation and is free of charge. Lunch will be provided. Please register by calling Molly Mitchell at 570-398-1676 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

November 9, 2017: Lecture at Bucknell University
"Genuine Love in the Reformation" is the title of a lecture on November 9, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at Bucknell University. It will be held in the LC Forum and feature Peter Iver Kaufman, George Matthews & Virginia Brinkley Modin Chair in Leadership Studies, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond.

November 27, 2017: Deadline for Seafarer Bags
Nearly 500 ship workers docked at the Port of New York/New Jersey last December received a reminder of God’s love for them during the Christmas season, thanks to the generous contributions of USS congregations who contributed gift bags last fall. The synod invites congregations and individuals to join together in collecting "Christmas-at-Sea" Gift Bags for seafarers this Christmas through the Seafarers and International House (SIH) in New York City (http://www.sihnyc.org/). Sturdy, imprinted plastic bags for this project are available now at the Synod Office. **PLEASE PAY ATTENTION TO THE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH BAG!** Each gift bag should contain one sweatshirt (L-XL), three pairs of crew or knee socks (no ankle 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. Filled sacks should be brought to the Synod Office by November 27 (the Monday after Thanksgiving) so that they may be transported to NYC in time for holiday distribution. Thank you for taking part in this ministry to some of the hardworking, lonely freighter crews who are responsible for 90 percent of the world’s trade via merchant ships.

November 29- December 1: Ecumenical Stewardship Center’s Generosity NEXT
Generosity Next takes place November 29 - December 1 in Nashville, Tennessee. It explores how current culture informs faithful stewardship and generous giving. This year's topic is Stewardship & Generosity: Are We Doing All We Can? Engage with keynote speakers Steve Manskar and Anne Burkholder as we explore John Wesley’s well-known sermons about money and their relevance for generous stewards of the 21st century. Connect with Christian sisters and brothers who share a passion for faithful stewardship and generous giving. Be inspired through meaningful worship, insightful presentations, and thoughtful conversation. Become better equipped to lead others in their discipleship journeys of becoming faithful stewards and generous givers. Contact Pastor Craig Miller in the Synod Office for information on ELCA sponsored registration. Information about Generosity NEXT and registration can be found at https://stewardshipresources.org/generosity-next.

February 9-10, 2017: GROW in the Snow
Save the date! This year’s synod youth retreat at Camp Mount Luther will be held on February 9-10, 2018. All youth in 6-12th grade and their youth leaders are invited to attend. The theme of this year’s retreat is “Hello God, It’s Me,” dealing with prayer. More details will be available soon. We are also offering a one-day option for those youth and leaders who just want to come on Saturday. Contact Chad Hershberger at chad@campmountluther.org with questions.
Last Call for BYG

Our deadline for this month’s BYG day-long event is quickly approaching. **Deadline to register is October 16, 2017, at 3:00 p.m.** The event will be held on October 21, 2017, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. To register, call the Camp Mount Luther office at 570-922-1587 or e-mail cml@campmountluther.org. Visit the camp website for a flyer and more information.

BYG is a program to help keep your youth group strong and growing by laying a foundation for its future members! Bring your youth to Camp Mount Luther for a fun community building time. We’ll work with you and your campers to facilitate relationship-building experiences. Youth leaders, pastors, and parents should bring as many as you can in this age bracket to help build comfort and trust within your future youth group. We’ll have team building, reflection time on God’s Word, games, and fellowship. One adult comes free for every seven kids you bring to camp. Additional adults come for half of the participant’s fee. **Cost for the program is $20.00. Each participant is asked to bring a bag lunch.** The fees associated with this program help cover staff time and materials for this event.

Make Your Reservation for an Evening at Shade Mountain

In less than a month, we’ll have our annual Evening at Shade Mountain Winery. The night is one of fellowship, entertainment, and of course, locally produced wine. Proceeds that night go to our annual fund. The event runs on November 3 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by Bernie Rich, a local musician who sings contemporary folk music and Christian anthems. The menu will include heavy appetizers, dessert, and one glass of wine per person. **SPACE IS LIMITED.** Please make your reservations with the camp office at 570-922-1587 or cml@campmountluther.org. If you choose to purchase any bottles of wine that evening, a portion of the proceeds will be given to Mount Luther. We ask all participants to make a donation to the camp that evening, equal or greater to the food and entertainment provided. A flyer for this event is available on our website.

Start a Thrivent Action Team!

Thrivent Financial has a program geared toward helping members engage in service projects in their communities. Members are encouraged to think about an unmet need in your community (for instance, at camp) and how you could help. Apply to lead your volunteer team in a one-time fundraiser, service activity, or educational event that can be completed within 90 days. Once your project is approved, you’ll receive a Thrivent Action Kit, including a promotional banner, invitations, thank you cards, T-shirts, and a $250 Community Impact Card that you can use as seed money to purchase project supplies and create promotional materials. All Thrivent members are eligible to lead a Thrivent Action Team. However, the number of teams each member can lead per year depends on his or her membership type. For more information on this program, visit [https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/](https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/). If you’d like to do an action team for camp, contact chad@campmountluther.org.
Painting Is Another Way to Help Pay for Camp!

This summer, Trinity Lutheran Church, McAlisterville, partnered with “Finding Picasso,” an art event company. That company’s mission is to teach, model, and support courageous, authentic self-expression and creativity through art.

The church sponsored an evening of painting to help raise money to send children and families to camp. They painted on canvas an image of the pond landscaping, including the dock that members of the church built in honor of the retirement of Pastor Jim Bricker a number of years ago. Thanks to Family Camper (and camper mother) Renee Freed for organizing this benefit to help send kids and families to camp.

Straight From the Camel's Mouth
By Kyros T. Camel

Since summer camp, time has been spent by the camp staff wrapping up from our busy season and starting to plan for next year. Also, Fall events are in full swing! It’s never a dull moment at Mount Luther.

This summer, as we mentioned in last month’s Camel Tracks, our campers collected money for the ELCA’s Walk for Water campaign. We received a thank you letter from Rev. Daniel Rift, the director of the ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal. He wrote, “With this gift, you are providing education and advocacy, water and sanitation, livestock and agriculture, health care and microloans.” He added that the ELCA is working in 62 countries around the world.

We had another successful Whoopie Pie stand at the Selinsgrove Market Street Festival in late September. It was a nice day weather-wise (a bit warm) and we were able to raise about $450 for the campership fund. Thanks to all those who donated pies, staffed the stand, and contributed in any way to our efforts.

As the weather gets colder, remember to put on a sweater! Our Care of Creation and Environmental Sustainability Committee wishes to share tips in the coming months on how you can be “more green.” When you turn up the heat in the wintertime, your furnace is probably burning fossil fuels. Wear a sweater to keep you warm and save some of our natural resources! At camp, we keep heat turned off in our cabins when not in use in the winter and turn down the heat in buildings which have waterlines when they are not in use. Our office staff also wears sweaters in the winter to work so they don’t have to have the heat up very high in the A-Center!

Did you go to Camp Susquehanna, held at Susquehanna University in the 1960s? We are interested in gathering some stories from that camp, which is also part of our history. If you went to Camp Susquehanna and want to share stories, photos, or memorabilia, please contact chad@campmountluther.org