Paper Art Adorns Church
By Marianne Murray, Youth Member
United In Christ, Lewisburg

What comes to mind when you think of the word “angel?” Halos and wings? Bright and heavenly? How about paper and butterflies? At United In Christ, Lewisburg (Pastor Justin Lingenfelter) there are currently two paper angels flying in the sanctuary. They have been a tradition at UIC for about 17 years, and they are put in place during the time between Advent and Lent.

Nine gracious ladies donated their time and effort into creating these beautiful masterpieces. It took about 36 working hours to complete this pair. In years past, there have been other sets of paper angels, but through wear and tear, new ones needed to be made.

The designs are inspired by Alice Helen Maskek, who is a professional paper cutter from California. One of the key qualities of the angels is the butterfly patterns in the robes, which are a symbol of resurrection.

Members of the congregation adore their presence. “They provide us with remembrance of the special night of Christ’s birth” said one member. Another remarked that “It makes me think of peace and joy.” A member of the church’s youth group said, when they think of the angels in the sanctuary, they think of “hope and comfort, knowing that you have someone watching over you.”

River of the Year in USS

The Loyalsock Creek, which runs through the Upper Susquehanna Synod was recently named PA River of the Year. The Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association and Carol Paranzan, Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper, were key in getting this designation. The Riverkeeper organization, will be getting a $10,000 grant to develop leadership around stewardship of this river. Carol has been a speaker for Lutheran Advocacy in Pennsylvania, which shared this news.

The Loyalsock Creek is home to legions of paddlers, anglers, and other outdoors enthusiasts in north central Pennsylvania, giving them the opportunity to enjoy God’s creation. The public was invited to vote online, choosing from among five waterways nominated across the state.
Free VBS Curriculum for Congregations
New Outdoor Ministry Curriculum Also Available

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) produces the curriculum each year that is used in camp and retreat settings and for Vacation Bible Schools and day camps. This year, LOM is offering their past VBS Bundles free to ELCA congregations.

To repeat: Special for this year only, all VBS Bundles are FREE for all ELCA congregations—yes, free! Each year the LOM curriculum provides a quality alternative for VBS curriculum at an affordable price. The bundle includes Bible study activities, crafts, and games for preschool children, and upper and lower elementary aged youth. Also included are planning documents, including Biblical and theme background information. To order the curriculum, visit www.lomnetwork.org.

LOM has also released its 2018 curriculum entitled "This Changes Everything." This curriculum has the same title as the theme for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering. It has been written in collaboration with the gathering team. The lessons are not the same but complement those that will be used for the gathering.

Included in the full curriculum package are five-day Bible study sessions for Elementary, Youth, and Adult, as well as games, crafts, environmental activities, and team-building activities. "This Changes Everything" is also available in other small bundles designed for Youth Ministry and VBS settings.

“This Changes Everything” is available for purchase and download on the LOM website at www.lomnetwork.org. Lutheran Outdoor Ministries is an association of outdoor ministry organizations dedicated to encouraging, equipping, educating, and empowering bold and faithful outdoor ministry leaders for service in the Church and in the world.

Up and Down the Valleys

Sharon, Selinsgrove (Pastor Bob Doll) is our latest congregation to be featured on our website. Check our homepage at www.uss-elca.org for our Featured Congregation.

Clergy Notes: The Rev. Dean L. Hoelz completed his service as missionary on March 26, 2017, and has returned to the United States. Synod Council has granted him retired status. He now resides in South Carolina. Rev. Pete Bergstresser has finished his interim at St. John, Leck Kill. Rev. Greg Kramer (Faith, Lewisburg) has announced his retirement, effective April 30. Rev. Charles Hershberger (Port Royal Parish) is retiring June 30.

Pastor Luther Martell was installed as pastor of St. Luke, Bloomsburg, on January 27. Pictured are Bishop Collins, Pastor Mark Galbraith (Milton Lutheran Parish), North Branch Conference Dean John Koons and Martell.

You can help tell the stories of our ministries within the synod. We welcome your submissions for USS Ark. If you have a ministry that you’d like to be featured, please send information to news@uss-elca.org. Pictures are welcomed but please get permission of those pictured before you send it to us. Thank you for your partnership and for reading USS Ark!

Bloomsburg University’s Protestant Campus Ministry will be hosting its first annual Kick the Cold Cookoff on February 17. The cook-off will be comprised of three dishes: chili, macaroni and cheese, and buffalo chicken dip. Prizes will be awarded and the ministry is encouraging local businesses to enter as well. PCM is a campus ministry supported by the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

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.

The Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Bishop
Announcements

**Liberian Partner Synod Announcement**
A new congregation--All Saints Lutheran Church-- has formed in Liberia and the pastor, Rev. Tolbert Jallah, has made a request for a candle-lighter and a pouring chalice for the altar. If any USS congregation with extras of these two items and is willing to donate them to All Saints, please contact Bob Bradford at (570)473-9505.

**Candles Available**
St. John’s, Mifflinville has been switching over to Kerry Liquid instead of using regular candles. They have a large inventory of leftover candles and have the following available:
- 1 box blue Advent candles 16” x 1 1/2”
- 1 box used blue Advent candles same size as above
- 1 box 12” white taper candles (12 pieces)
- 1 box white candles 15” x 1 1/8” (12 pieces)
- 1 box white candles 17” x 1 1/4” (6 pieces)
- 1 box white candles 15” x 1 1/8” (6 pieces)
- 1 box white candles 8 7/8” x 7/8” (9 pieces)
- Numerous white candles minimally used

If anyone is interested they can contact the church office at 570-752-2289 or by email at stjohnsmifflin@verizon.net

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**Upper Susquehanna Synod Events Calendar**

**February 10, 2018: Disaster Response Meeting**
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! Those interested in participating in Disaster Response Work Teams are encouraged to attend an informational meeting at the synod office (500 Reitz Blvd, Lewisburg) on Saturday, February 10, 2017, from 10:00 a.m.-noon. Plans are underway to arrange for up to four ecumenical work trips this year to places such as Houston, Florida and Puerto Rico. For information, contact Craig Miller, Assistant to the Bishop. Plans are underway for two ecumenical work trips to Florida (Volusia County) in 2018, with hopes to have more in 2019, including bringing assistance to Puerto Rico.

**February 11, 2018: Mount Luther Sunday**
The Upper Susquehanna Synod Council has designated that Transfiguration Sunday each year be recognized as “Mount Luther Sunday” to help promote outdoor ministries in the synod. Members of USS congregations are encouraged to celebrate outdoor ministries on this day, February 11, 2018. Mount Luther is an extension of the ministry that is done in local Lutheran congregations. The camp asks that congregations promote the camp on that Sunday or designate another Sunday this spring to do so. Ways to promote the camp include bulletin inserts to share with congregation members, Temple Talks, camper testimonials, bulletin board displays, special camp music during Sunday school and church services, as well as special offering being collected. Ideas are available here: https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2018-Mount-Luther-Sunday-Flyer.pdf. For a bulletin insert to put in your church bulletin, click here: https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/General-Bulletin-Insert.pdf

**February 16-17, 2018: Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training**
Interested in investing in your own leadership and the vitality of your congregation? Our synod will host a two-day training for those interested in becoming facilitators for Healthy Congregations. This training will take place at the synod office – 500 Reitz Blvd, Lewisburg. Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training provides faith communities with the perspective and challenge that contribute toward health and thoughtful mission and ministry in these exciting and transformative times. An introduction to the
thinking behind the workshops will be offered as well as an overview of the resources that facilitators will have access to following the training. Discounted registration has ended; if you would like to attend this workshop visit the Healthy Congregations website: [https://www.healthycongregations.com/event/healthy-congregations-inc-facilitator-training/](https://www.healthycongregations.com/event/healthy-congregations-inc-facilitator-training/). For more information contact Assistant to the Bishop Craig Miller: prcmiller@uss-elca.org or 570-524-9778.

**February 28- March 3, 2018: ALDE IGNITE in Minneapolis**

Learn how to take your mission to the next level at IGNITE: Minneapolis 2018, February 28-March 3. This conference will include top-notch keynote speakers as well as rich curriculum sessions and network building opportunities for those with congregational leadership, fundraising, communications, or marketing roles. If you are looking to grow an already vibrant organization, need to reenergize a once-thriving program or are guiding an organization that’s just in its infancy, ALDE is here for you. View the curriculum. Find out more at ignitespark.org. Register now at [www.alde.org/register](http://www.alde.org/register). Early Bird Rates expire January 10. Please note that it is less expensive to become an ALDE member, and then register as a member, than it is to attend as a nonmember. So, you might as well join and take advantage of all ALDE offers year-round. Why ALDE? Click here and find out! People just like you who are ready to learn, connect and experience career and mission changing curriculum. In 2017, attendees held such titles as: Pastor, Principal, Board Member, Chief Development Officer, Major Gifts Officer, CEO, Executive Director Consultant, Annual Fund Director, Special Events Coordinator, Director of Marketing, and many more — so you are certain to make a strong peer connection at this event. The conference offers content for every area of the development profession, and for congregational leaders. Can't make it to the full event, or looking to save money? Try the day rate! Attend just one day for a very reduced price. March 1 offers several curriculum sessions designed with pastors and congregational leaders in mind. Topics include: Igniting Donor ATM (Abilities, Time, and Money); Kindling the Spiritual Meaning of Philanthropy; and IGNITING Planned Giving for Churches and Schools. Other days highlight additional focus points. There’s even more you can gain from attending IGNITE. We are offering the chance to win a Pro Bono Consultation from Gronlund Sayer Brunkow to someone who is new to ALDE, or has been a member for less than five years. This could be you, but you must attend IGNITE! Learn about the opportunity and sign up now to win at bit.ly/aldegrant (case sensitive). ALDE inspires, educates and mentors the Christian fundraising community to spark generosity for mission. We are an international community of fundraising and communication professionals rooted in the Lutheran tradition of the Christian faith and dedicated to serving God’s people in the church and the world.

**March 3, 2018: Jonathan Rundman Concert**

Jonathan Rundman, contemporary rock/folk musician, will perform at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Lancaster on Saturday, March 3, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. This is part of the Musical Arts series at St. Peter’s. Come for what promises to be an uplifting evening of beautiful music. For more information visit [https://www.facebook.com/events/343210709443562/](https://www.facebook.com/events/343210709443562/). Come back Sunday, March 4th as Jonathan will be helping to lead worship at their New Day service, too.

**March 3, 2018: Church Pot Pie Supper in Western Union County**

Christ’s United, Millmont, will be holding their spring Pot Pie Supper on Saturday, March 3, 2018, starting at 3:30 p.m. Ham, Chicken and Beef Pot Pie will be available. Meals include applesauce, pickled cabbage, roll, beverage and cake. Dinners and quarts of pot pie are available for take-out. For more information call us at (570) 922-1860, email potpie@4bellschurch.com or visit [www.4bellschurch.com](http://www.4bellschurch.com).

**March 7-9, 2018: Radical Inclusion**

Progressive Youth Ministry presents “Radical Inclusion” on March 7-9, 2018. Cost is $199 and will be held at the Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina. Keynote speakers include Andrew Root, Monica Coleman, Ben Connor, and Abbi Long. Preachers include Ashley Birt and Alice Conner. For more information, visit ProgressiveYouthMinistry.org.

“New Tax Law, New Ways to Give” is a workshop that will look at how the new tax laws might affect you. If you currently take the required minimum distribution from an IRA or are a church leader concerned about how the new tax law will affect congregation giving, this one-hour session hosted by our synod’s Gift Planner is for you. The workshop will be presented by Rev. Elizabeth Polanzke, ELCA Regional Gift Planner. It will be held on Sunday, March 11, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. at Camp Mount Luther, 355 Mt. Luther Lane, Mifflinburg. For more information, please contact Pastor Liz Polanzke at 717-654-2334 or elizabeth.polanzke@elca.org. To download a flyer for this event, click http://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/USS_Giving_Poster.pdf

March 14-15, 2018: Camp Mount Luther is Helped by Raise the Region
Camp Mount Luther is participating in “Raise the Region” on March 14-15, 2018. The event, coordinated by The First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania, helps the community support local nonprofit organizations’ fund raising efforts. FCFP, in partnership with Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships, will be launching the 30-hour fundraising event on March 14 and 15, 2018, starting at 6:00 p.m. on March 14 and ending at 11:59 p.m. on March 15. Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships has donated $150,000 that will be used to stretch a portion of donations made to pre-registered nonprofits. Additional monetary prizes and incentives will be awarded throughout the entire event. This program is designed to help organizations, like Camp Mount Luther, kick off our 2018 fundraising campaigns and increase donor bases. Proceeds from this event will go to camp’s Annual Fund, unless a donor gets in touch with the camp office to designate it for another camp cause. How It Works:
1. On March 14 and 15, donors will visit www.raisetheregion.org from a computer, smart phone, iPad, etc. to learn more about the nonprofits participating and how their work is impacting our community.
2. You can then make an online donation to support one or more of those nonprofit organizations on the Raise the Region website. Running totals will be shown throughout the day at the Raise the Region website.
3. At the end of the donation period, a pro-rated match per gift will be determined and the Community Foundation will send checks to all participating nonprofits with the amount raised, the pro-rated match, and any EXTRA money from prizes awarded throughout the day.
Camp Mount Luther has participated in Raise the Region for five years and has garnered about $65,000 in donations during this event. The camp hopes you will help us to have another successful year!

2018 Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends Announced
Your marriage relationship is one of the things in life that provides the greatest potential for happiness. Is yours living up to this potential? Please make 2018 the year you resolve to attend a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend to learn how to maximize the joy and intimacy that God intends for your marriage. The following weekends have been scheduled with one more to be added in Massachusetts in the fall.

- March 16-18, 2018, at Heritage Hotel Lancaster in Lancaster, PA. A newly-renovated hotel, home of the unique treehouse-inspired restaurant, "Loxley's."
- April 6-8, 2018, at Toftrees Golf Resort in State College PA. A peaceful resort surrounded by a golf course and nestled in the woods in the center of PA.
- September 14-16, 2018, at Spruce Lake Retreat in Canadensis, PA. A lovely hotel-style facility In a wooded area of the Poconos, an hour north of Allentown.

Two nights lodging, five 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. To be sure to get the Weekend of your choice, sign up at your earliest convenience by going to the website: www.GodLovesMarriage.org and paying the registration fee 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 724-325-3166 or fjschamber@comcast.net.
March 22, 2018: LARC Luncheon
Our synod has participated in Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic (LARC) dialog since its inception. Together with the Lower Susquehanna Synod, Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, and Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg, we entered into covenant in 1993, committing ourselves to “leading the church to greater unity”. The commitments we made in that covenant continue to be lived out in our congregations and in bi-monthly lunch dialogs at the Diocese of Harrisburg Keeler Center. Anyone interested in joining the conversation may attend these lunches – contact Rev. Craig Miller for more information or to be added to the notification list. Dates for 2018 include March 22, May 22, July 26, September 18, November 15.

April 16, 2018: Retirement Planning Seminar
Retirement planning can seem daunting without someone to walk you through it. Portico’s day-long pre-retirement seminar for plan members age 50+ does just that. And it’s coming to your area soon! The seminar covers many facets of retirement planning in understandable terms — from establishing a retirement budget to reviewing health care options. You’ll breathe easier when you know the steps to take to retire with confidence. Take advantage of this opportunity by attending the seminar on April 16, 2018 at Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Emmaus, Pennsylvania. Go to https://www.porticobenefits.org/NewsEvents/Events/Pre-RetirementSeminars to register! Cost is $35/person or $70/couple.

April 21, 2018: WELCA Day of Learning and Renewal
The Upper Susquehanna Synodical Women’s Organization presents their Day of Learning Renewal on April 21, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Christ, Milton. The theme is "Bring Peace" and the presenter is Mary Woods. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. Cost is $5. The registration deadline is April 10, 2018. Lunch will be provided.

April 22, 2018: Camp Mount Luther Spring Open House
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 22, 2018, 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 $30 discount on their summer registration! To download a flyer for the event, click here: https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-CML-Spring-Open-House-Flyer.pdf.

April 24-27, 2018: Princeton Forum on Youth Ministry
This Forum gathers Christian leaders who are passionate about young people and the church. Youth ministers, Christian educators, pastors, ministry innovators, and emerging scholars from the USA and beyond gather annually for this 4-day event on the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary. This year, the theme is IMAGE. They will explore what it means to practice youth ministry in a visual age. Hear from speakers like Matthew Milliner, Brian Bantum, and Katie Douglass. Renew your energy for ministry as you create vocational friendships, stretch your imagination, and give Sabbath to your soul. For more information, visit http://iymforum.com.

May 2-4, 2018: Bishop’s Retreat for Rostered Leaders
The annual bishop’s retreat will be held on May 2-4 at Camp Hebron, Halifax PA. Rostered leaders are asked to mark their calendars and plan to attend the retreat. More information will be available next month as to the topic. If spouses are interested in attending, please let Bishop Collins know.

May 7-8, 2018: Youth Ministry in a Scientific Age
The youth ministry conference, “Jesus Rode a Dinosaur and other Silly Tales,” looking at faithful youth ministry in a scientific age, will be held on May 7-8, 2018. Cost is $99 and will be held at Colonial Church
of Edina in Minnesota. Speakers include Krista Tippett, “Science Mike” McHargue, and Kenda Dean. For more information, visit ScienceYM.org

May 14, 2018: Bishop’s Open Golf Classic
The annual Bishop Open's Golf Classic is set for May 14, 2018, 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: https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-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 21, 2018: Lutheran Day of Advocacy
Join Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania and fellow advocates from across the commonwealth in Harrisburg on May 21, 2018, for inspiration, education and participation – in worship, service and advocacy – with a focus on a powerful element in our life together: Water. This year’s theme for Lutheran Day of Advocacy is “Roll Down Like Waters.” We are drowned and reborn in it at our baptism. The promises made at the font recall God’s covenant reminder in Amos to “let justice roll down” like it. And, in Pennsylvania, we are surrounded by it – with more miles of waterways than any of the other lower 48 states. We will consider our response to the status of being the most flood-prone state in the U.S. and the fact that nearly one third of our waterways are impaired. Most importantly, we will explore how we can be church together in Pennsylvania, so that justice might “roll down like waters.” Registration opens in early 2018. Bring a friend – or a team – and join advocates from across the Commonwealth to ground and deepen your call to faith-rooted advocacy.

June 15-16, 2018: Synod Assembly
The 2018 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly will take place on the campus of Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, on June 15-16, 2018. Registration materials will arrive in congregations in a few weeks. Special attention needs to be made to the meal registrations. Meal tickets will not be available after the late registration date or at the door on the days of the assembly. And we will again go paperless this year. More detailed information will be provided as it becomes available and will be posted at http://uss-elca.org/assembly. All rostered leaders and voting members from every congregation are expected to attend. Clergy need to write an excuse to the bishop if you cannot attend.