

HEADWATERS

News for Upper Susquehanna Synod Leaders

April 2020



NEWS, PRAYERS, AND LINKS

- Please read the letter from the Synod Office about considerations when congregations reopen: <https://tinyurl.com/ybr55832>. More resources on COVID-19 response can be found here: www.ussecla.org/coronavirus
- Synod Council voted at their meeting on April 18 to provide some financial relief. They authorized grants to congregations in the amount of up to \$5,000 per congregation to support temporary financial need, such as mortgage debt coverage or payroll, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Congregations need to provide a description of the need along with financial reports from 2019 and 2020 (year to date) showing monthly expenses. No more than \$45,000 will be expended for these grants. Council also authorized grants to individual rostered leaders for up to \$3,000 per individual, to cover temporary loss of income –for items such as mortgage or rent, loan payments, including credit cards–caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. Applicants will have to provide a description of the need and a statement of monthly compensation. Payments will be made directly to the holder of debt or biller. Grants will not exceed monthly compensation. Total funding for grants will not exceed \$65,000.
- Congregations should flush their faucets and toilets weekly during the shutdown, and make sure to do so before opening up again. Stagnant water in pipes can cause health problems.
- Thank you to those who have completed the Congregation Needs Survey that will be used to help our synod identify where financial assistance from ELCA COVID-19 funds might help our congregations continue to serve in their communities. If you have not done the survey, visit <https://forms.gle/JfjicS3v4Kf9bXin6>. You can also enter any changes to the situation at your ministry by completing a new survey.
- Pennsylvania law states that meetings in which members attend by electronic means (phone or internet) are permitted unless a congregation's constitution contains language explicitly forbidding electronic meetings. All participants in the meeting must be able to hear and be heard; and any written material presented in the meeting must be accessible to all participants.

MILESTONES

Trinity, Sunbury (*Pastor Mary Peterhansel*) completed the sale of their building in March and held a service of closing.

Rev. Robert Doll is now interim for St. Paul, Middle Creek Dam.

At their April meeting, Synod Council voted to grant retirement status to the following rostered leaders:

Deacon Mary Lou Byerly, effective March 30.
Rev. Melody Sell, effective June 30, 2020
Rev. Ron Montgomery, effective May 31, 2020.

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):

60 years:

Rev. Clinton Chu (retired) 5/18/1960

15 years:

Rev. Joshua Reinsburrow (Messiah, South Williamsport) 5/15/2005

CLERGY SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Pastor Jim Bricker has some clergy shirts available to a good home. Contact him at gymbri@embarqmail.com if interested:

Size 16, Black Long Sleeve (Banded collar)
Size 16 Black Long Sleeve (Tab collar)
Size 16 ½ Black Short Sleeve (Tab collar)- 2 shirts
Size 16 Grey Short Sleeve (Tab collar)
Size 16 ½ Grey Short Sleeve (Tab collar)
Size 16 Black 33-34 Long Sleeve (Tab collar)

MORE NEWS, PRAYERS, AND LINKS

- Prayers for Pastors Jim Fladland and Bill Jones for restoration of health, and Deacon Connie Fladland who continues to heal from cataract surgery.
- Prayers for first responders. Non-hospital first responders, who are not getting as much attention as those in the ER or other hospital staffers) are quite stressed and feeling that communities are forgetting about them being out in public. Please include them in your prayers and in offering support for any specific needs they may have at this time.
- Clergy can deduct from their income (on schedule SE) expenses for purchases they had to make in order to work from home. This is a regular deduction allowed because pastors are responsible for their social security and Medicare tax. If you had to purchase a new computer, hardware, software (such a subscription to Zoom) and were not reimbursed by the congregation, you should retain their receipts in order to take advantage of this deduction.
- Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) offers an opportunity for organizations continuing to provide community support to register for possible Public Assistance Grant applications related to the current pandemic. Funding is not certain, but PEMA is collecting information now: <https://arcg.is/1qDXiH>
- The ELCA has received Forms A & C from approximately 2/3 of congregations so far. The 2019 data will be used to allocate voting members for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, so it would be great to boost that submission rate. If you did not fill yours out, go to www.elca.org/congregationreport. Deans have information on who needs to complete these forms. **Congratulations to the Juniata Valley Conference for being the first to have 100% submission of Parochial Reports!**
- The Generosity Project (TGP) - ELCA is providing the 5G: Live It Out! resource to you and your households for free. This resource is intended to encourage conversation and support households in their role as God's stewards and financial managers during this time of economic crisis and fear. Please encourage your households to use this resource to find hope in God's Story and engage in these faithful conversations. Get the resource here: <https://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TGP-LIVE-IT-OUT-0320.pdf>
- Check out continuing education offerings from the Stevenson School for Ministry: <https://diocesecpa.org/ssfm/>

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MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Please visit our website for the latest list of ministry opportunities, including our long-term interims:

<https://www.uss-elca.org/ministry-opportunities/>



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People of God, these are interesting times to be in ministry. As you master many new skills and carry concerns about your people, your church's finances, and your own family, please know that Portico is here to walk with you. Portico plan members, sign in to myPortico at <https://www.porticobenefits.org/> for these timely resources.

Portico has announced a new hub on myPortico which details financial and health resources specifically related to COVID-19, including: updates on how the CARES Act can provide financial relief for congregations; telemedicine and emotional health support options for ELCA-Primary and ELCA Medicare-Primary plan members; answers about managing or adjusting flexible spending accounts; and financial resources from the ELCA Retirement Plan Recordkeeping Services Provider, Fidelity. Access those here: <https://myportico.porticobenefits.org/TimelyMemberResources>.

FOR MEMBERS WITH ELCA PRIMARY HEALTH COVERAGE:

COVID 19 testing and treatment is covered without out of pocket costs.

Beginning this year, we have text based primary care option called **98point6**. It makes connecting with a physician as simple as sending a text. Access care any time of day and anywhere — no appointments necessary. We also continue to have **Doctor on Demand** which is a video online service. For both 98point6 and DOD now until June 15th there are no out of pocket cost for using them which certainly help your wallet.

With all that is going on these days that can cause depression, anxiety, insomnia and stress brings me to our second new program for 2020 is called **Learn to Live**. **Learn to Live's** programs offer effective tools to help you and your family understand how your mind works and change your behavior patterns—to help you live your best life. And it's available at no cost to you when you need it. You have access to the online programs 24/7.

There are times when everyone feels overwhelmed. No matter what kind of difficulty you face, you've got a place to start with your **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. Call EAP, 24/7, at **800.432.5155**. You'll speak directly with a master's-level professional EAP counselor who can assess your situation and help you with next steps.

FOR ALL PORTICO MEMBERS:

Another new benefit this year is our **Being** academy which is an online holistic, faith-based, educational platform offering expert-led videos on a wide range of well-being skills. There's a mindfulness course, yoga, cooking and more where you can explore at the comfort of your home.

We all are also under financial stress— and we don't know where things are going. Connect now with a Portico financial planner. You can make an appointment right online through myPortico.

For more information on any of these benefits, call the Customer Care Center at 800.352.2876 or contact your Portico Regional Representative, Barbara Debski at bdebski@porticobenefits.org

Upper Susquehanna Synod Events Calendar

April 28, 2020: Free Webinar "Mental Health in a Time of COVID-19/Preparing Leaders"

The Partnership Center, part of the Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives of the US Dept. of Health & Human Services, is starting a new webinar series with the goal to help you understand what research tells us may be coming, the perspective of mental health professionals in this moment, and what faith leaders are preparing to address. **When:** Tuesday, April 28, at 12:00 p.m. For more:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MRqSh2XWQDynNrdHu84VVg

May 7, 2020: Free Webinar "Combating Social Isolation for Seniors during COVID-19"

SAMHSA, Administration for Community Living, Veterans Health Administration, and National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging are hosting this meeting for National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day 2020. The meeting will be an open discussion about helping older Americans during this time of social isolation. **When:** Thursday, May 7, from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. For more:

<http://www.cvent.com/events/national-older-adults-mental-health-awareness-day-2020-combating-social-isolation-for-seniors-during/event-summary-d01fb4dae7ef4b86ac28a240b5e8262d.aspx?RefID=05072020>

May 18, 2020: Lutheran Day at the Capital

LAMPa's traditional day to gather in the Capitol is being revised this year in response to COVID-19. Similarly to congregations, LAMPa is working to provide a virtual offering. As plans move forward we will be in touch. Please continue to save May 18!

May 18-22, 2020: Festival of Homiletics

This is now a free event. Visit <https://www.festivalofhomiletics.com/> for more information.

June 19-20, 2020: Synod Assembly- POSTPONED

On Saturday, April 4, Synod Council voted to postpone the 2020 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly.

July 26-31, 2020: Naming Project Youth Camp

The Naming Project also announced that it will hold its trademark youth camp from July 26-31. The youth camp is designed for 14-18 year-olds or those who have completed 8th-12th grades who are of any sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Campers are interested in discussing and understanding sexuality and gender in terms of their own spiritual journey and are excited to spend time with other teen campers and staff while canoeing, swimming, hiking, singing, doing arts and crafts. Since its founding, The Naming Project Summer Camp has hosted over 200 campers from 21 states and was the focus of the award-winning documentary 'Camp Out.' For more information on the youth camp, visit: <http://www.thenamingproject.org/summer-camp>

September 21, 2020: Bishop's Open Golf Classic

The annual Bishop's Open Golf Classic scheduled for May 11, 2020, has been postponed until September 21, 2020, with the same schedule. Registration starts at 11 with lunch following and a shotgun start at 12:30 p.m. at the Susquehanna Valley Country Club in Shamokin Dam. Snacks and prizes after golfing. The tournament benefits Camp Mount Luther's annual fund. A flyer/bulletin insert containing information and registration form is available here: <https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Sept-Golf-Tournament-Flyer.pdf>. The camp's golf tournament committee is currently looking for hole 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!