NEWS, PRAYERS, AND LINKS


- The Executive Committee of Synod Council voted to cancel Synod Assembly for 2020 rather than postpone it to the fall. A bulletin of reports will be available on the synod website by June 19, which would have been the first day of our assembly. Those congregations who registered early should have received their reimbursement of assembly fees.

- ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will record a sermon which congregations and synods can include in their worship services on Sunday, June 7, The Holy Trinity. The video will be available to view and download on May 31 at YouTube.com/ELCA and Vimeo.com/ELCA. Bishop Eaton will read the gospel appointed for this day prior to the sermon. Local decisions can be made to use the reading on the video or invite another person to read the gospel instead. ELCA Worship will provide a resource that includes texts for a Service of the Word, appointed readings, corporate Prayers of Intercession, and hymn and song suggestions. Synods or congregations may adapt and use this resource to produce online worship offerings to surround Bishop Eaton’s sermon. This material will be available on May 26. ELCA Worship will continue to provide “Worship in the Home” via the ELCA Worship blog (blogs.ELCA.org/Worship) for those who make use of these resources for individual/family home devotions each week. On June 7th, “Worship in the Home” will include a link to watch Bishop Eaton’s sermon as part of these home devotions.

- With the outbreaks of COVID-19 in the United States and around the world, our church and its leaders continue to minister to its members, to those who are hurting and searching for peace, and to those in need. Resources are available to help congregations and members stay connected and resilient during this crisis. Visit ELCA.org/publichealth for more.

MILESTONES

Pastor Kate Drefke has concluded her time at Faith, Lewisburg.

Pastor Ron Montgomery (St. John’s, Unityville) retires on May 31

Pastor Melody Sell (Washingtonville; Hidlay; Christ United, Catawissa) retires June 30

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. David Harris (retired) 6/26/1960

55 years:
Rev. Steven Middernacht (retired) 6/9/1965
Rev. Thomas Kramm (retired) 6/8/1965

35 years:
Rev. Gordon Smith (St. John, Espy) 6/2/1985

15 years:
Rev. Carla Volland (Evangelical, Reedsville) 6/18/2005

10 years:
Rev. Cinda Brucker (Trinity and Mt. Zion, Hughesville) 6/19/2010

5 years:
Deacon Jennifer Baker-Trinity (ELCA) 6/19/2015
This past year, ELCA congregations received more than $100 million in electronic giving through a combination of mobile, web, text and kiosk. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most congregations are worshiping online and unable to pass the offering plate. As a result, electronic giving is more important than ever to sustain your ministries. The ELCA has two preferred vendors for online giving: Tithe.ly and Vanco. Special pricing accompanies each agreement, and the sign-up process is quick and easy so you can start receiving online gifts within days. For more information on Tithe.ly, visit https://get.tithe.ly/elca or contact 424-228-8914 or elca@tithe.ly. For GivePlus, powered by Vanco, visit http://www.giveplus.com/elca or contact 855-910-6066 or sales@vancopayments.com.

Portico’s online COVID-19 resource pages provide members and sponsoring employers with up-to-date information on health benefits, investment performance, and market behavior, as well as government action affecting ministry organizations and those they employ. Health benefit members can find updated information on testing, treatment, home delivery for long-term maintenance prescription drugs, and emotional support. For ELCA sponsoring employers For ELCA plan members Portico’s public website

A guide to obtaining online guests after your church’s biggest day: https://tinyurl.com/y8s465yc

Stewardship Bundle of Rev. Charles Lane: https://resources.elca.org/Stewardship-Stewardship_Bundle_of_Rev_Charles_Lane.html This bundle includes two digital resources, Because of God’s Great Mercies and Walk with Jesus, and a book that will be mailed to you, Reflections on Faith and Finances. This bundle is available for a limited time at a special price of $15.

All conferences will next meet in September. Some conferences may continue with Zoom meetings into the summer – check with your Dean for more information.
Be Counted!
This is the year for the decennial US Census. Response rates for the Susquehanna Valley are tracking ahead of both National and Pennsylvania averages, with over 50% of households in the region already completing their form. Faith communities are encouraged to make sure their members are counted. See links below for and FAQ for Faith Communities and a direct link to respond to the 2020 Census.

https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2020-01/Faith_Community_FAQ.pdf
https://my2020census.gov/

Stevenson School of Ministry News
A partnership of the Episcopal Diocese of Central PA, the Lower Susquehanna Synod, and the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

• Podcast listeners: Looking for ways to prepare for the way forward and to capture that which we have learned in ourselves and in the life of the church through all the changes? We invite you during this time of making important choices to listen to and engage the wisdom shared in Telling our Stories: Practicing Forward, Capturing Change with Rev. Dr. Gina Campbell. Right now, we wonder, "how is it with our hearts and souls?" https://diocesepca.org/ssfm/practicing-forward-series-with-rev-dr-gina-campbell/

• Join our June Praying with the Psalms module to continue next steps with Practicing Forward, Capturing Change. Consider your earliest experience of the Psalms, what challenges you and what wisdom do the Psalms have for us today. Led by The Rev. Richard Jorgensen. To register click here: https://diocesepca.org/shaped-by-faith-courses/registration/

• The Gospel of John: Join us as Dr. Deirdre Good leads us into a deeper dive into a critical introduction to and explanation of study of the theology and spirituality of the Gospel of John. For more information and to register: https://diocesepca.org/shaped-by-faith-courses/

• Holy Places- Liturgy in Space & Time with Dr. Joshua Davis: The class meets for six sessions and its organized around our "Liturgical Centers": font, pulpit, altar, Presider's chair, choir space, and congregational space. This class is an asynchronous, online course, with direct access to the instructor. For more information and to register: https://diocesepca.org/shaped-by-faith-courses/

• Joining the Jesus Movement with The Rev. Canon Kate Harrigan: This five-week course module centers on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calling us to join the Jesus Movement in a loving, liberating and life-giving Way. For more information and to register: https://diocesepca.org/shaped-by-faith-courses/

May 28-29, 2020: Navigating the Rapids- Finding Hope in Trying Times
Join in this Zoom event. A link will be sent after registration and before the start of the conference. It will be held on Thursday, May 28, from 5:30- 9:00 p.m. and Friday, May 29, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Join Keynoters Tod Bolsinger and Peter Steinke offering presentations on "Hope and the Mountain of Despair: Resilience for Change Leaders" and "Bowen Theory and Brain Functioning.” The event includes:
• An introductory workshop on Bowen Theory with Dana Runestad and Fulgence Nyengele
• Opportunities for prayer and conversation
• Q and A time with presenters
• Testimonies on the impact of systems thinking on ministry life
• Workshops
June 11, 2020: Generosity Zoom Meeting
Are some of the congregations you work with struggling financially? Compared to a year ago, many ELCA congregations have seen a decline in total revenue. While the pandemic does not stop ministry outside the walls of our congregations, it is having an impact on financial contributions. This means both regular giving and fundraising efforts. And yet, there are congregations that have maintained or increased their giving. How do these congregations continue to be generous?

For more than a year, the ELCA has been focusing on cultivating generous congregations. Rev. Larry Strenge and his Lake Institute trained team have worked with more than a hundred ELCA congregations. This has led to three strategies – recognizing the impact of negative influences (i.e., the pandemic, scarcity thinking), cultivating generosity leaders and developing a culture of generosity in your congregation and households.

Join Rev. Larry Strenge for a webinar to talk about these three strategies and how congregations can be proactive in nurturing generosity. This Zoom meeting will be on Thursday, June 11, at 3PM CDT

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3199415281
Meeting ID: 319 941 5281
One tap mobile
+13126266799,,3199415281# US (Chicago)
+14702509358,,3199415281# US (Atlanta)

All Roster Leaders and lay leaders are invited. This session will be recorded and made available. If you are unable to attend on June 11, simply notify Neil.Bullock@elca.org and a link will be provided. We look forward to you joining us for this conversation. Please bring your questions.

September 13, 2020: “God’s work. Our hands.” Day of Service
You are invited to add your voices to this year’s “God’s work. Our hands.” Day of Service. And, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of PA can help you take your service to neighbor a step further toward justice through advocacy. Learn more here: https://tinyurl.com/y8a4p2hu

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!