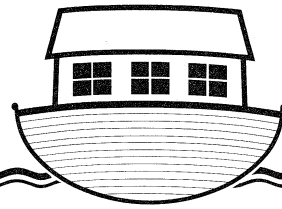


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News of God's People in Action



November
2020

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Closing Congregations Lead to New Ministry



On October 4, Rev. Craig Miller presided at a service of leave-taking for the final worship of St. Peter, Aristes. Founded in 1893 by members of St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Numidia, St. Peter originally shared a pastor with the Numidia congregation. At the time the town was known as Montana. The congregation dedicated the building that would serve them for 120 years on February 18, 1900. For thirteen years, from 1914 to 1927 St. Peter shared a pastor with St. Paul Lutheran Church in Gowen City.

St. Peter enjoyed its ecumenical relationships, including those with sister Lutheran congregations. They participated in ecumenical services with Roman Catholic, Ukrainian and Methodist congregations in their area as well.

Sixteen pastors served the congregation of St Peter over its 127 years. The longest serving of these - 23 years - was Pastor H.M. Schofer. Most recently, Pastor Alfred Bashore served as interim pastor at St Peter.

The congregation requested that, upon sale of the church property and final dissolution of the corporation, the remaining financial assets be shared with the Aristes Fire Company and the Zion United Methodist Cemetery in Aristes.

A pastor in Sunbury and his family were working at their church's prayer station when an older couple approached them. They said, "We have been noticing your church parking lot and street parking. Your church is really growing! Unfortunately, ours is dying. We are from the church just up the street from you. Wouldn't it be something if we could swap buildings or sell you ours?" So, Keith Bunch, the senior pastor of Sunbury God's Missionary Church, contacted the pastor of Trinity, Sunbury, but was told the church was not interested in selling. Bunch and his family continued to pray and after some time, he felt a need to walk to Trinity and talk to the current pastor, Pastor Mary Peterhaensel.

Pastor Mary, with a look of disbelief, responded, "I can't believe this! This has to be of God." The congregation council was meeting the next night to discuss what to do with their building. Earlier this year, after two years of deliberations and paperwork, Trinity signed over the building to God's Missionary Church and began the process of closing their congregation of 116 years.



Their ministry will go on, however, even though they are not a congregation anymore. The congregation voted to give 60 percent of their final assets (\$86,260) to Camp Mount Luther with 30 percent (\$43,130) going to ELCA World Hunger and 10 percent (\$14,375) to United Lutheran Seminary Chad Hershberger, executive director of the camp, said gifts like this help them to go ministry in perpetuity.

Continued on next page

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"When we receive a gift like this from a closing congregation, if they don't have other stipulations, we like to put those funds in our endowment fund. That allows us to continue to use this money each year toward programming and facilities improvement. The folks at Trinity can know that this generous gift will be used to do ministry at Mount Luther for years to come!" Hershberger said.

Founded in 1903 under the leadership of a "missionary pastor," Mr. George Scheese, a senior in the Theological Seminary of Selinsgrove, along with fifty-three charter members, the Trinity congregation served the fifth ward of Sunbury. Services began in the fifth ward schoolhouse until the new church building was completed and dedicated on May 28, 1905. A second missionary pastor, Mr. E. M. Gearhart, a junior at the seminary, went on to become the pastor of the congregation after his ordination in 1906. The church building was damaged by flooding in 1936 and suffered severe damage from a fire in 1951 that led to construction of a new building that was completed the following year. The congregation added a religious education building in 1969.

Over their history the congregation was served by sixteen pastors, several of whom served in interim capacity: Rev. Gearhart, Rev. L.G. Shauffer, Rev. W.H. Hilbish, Rev. David Krammerer, Rev. Earl Mohny, Rev. Joseph Janson, Rev. Lee McDaniel, Rev. Henry Reed, Rev. John Stoudt, Rev. John Pretz, Rev. Adrian Shearer, Rev. Collette Broady-Preiss (interim), Rev. Rich Fangman & Rev. Wayne Muthler (co-interim), and Rev. Constantine Havir. Rev. Mary Peterhaensel was the interim pastor at the time the congregation closed.

Up and Down the Valleys

The Women of the ELCA

collected blankets, health and school kits as part of their annual Blanket Sunday.

Congregations brought their collections to the synod office on October 10 to be packed up and delivered to New Windsor, Maryland.



The **Camp Mount Luther Corporation Board of Directors** recently elected leadership for the coming year at their quarterly board meeting. Re-elected were Rev. William Henderson of Selinsgrove, president; Nancy Wood of Williamsport, vice president; Rev. Andrew Weaver of Sunbury, secretary; Terry Gardner of Muncy, treasurer.

Clergy Notes: **Rev. Jerri Carlin** is serving as Interim at St. John, Northumberland, and St. Stephen, Licking Creek, after completing her call at St. John's, Lewistown. **Rev. Kate Drefke's** contract ended with St. Paul's (Erdley's), Middleburg, which is now being served by Interim Pastor Ann Zimmerman. **Rev. MarthaSue Moll** retired on September 30 as pastor of the Elysburg Parish and **Rev. Sarah Hershberger** is serving as interim.

Do you know someone who could serve? Nominate them with the **Upper Susquehanna Synod** committee recommendation form. As the synod begins in earnest to implement the synod strategy, we need people who can help to develop goals and processes with the implementation team. We also need individuals with skills for funding the plan, which will involve congregational stewardship. And, we need people to help with synod governance, finance, and the bishop's discernment team. Find the form at <https://www.uss-elca.org/committee-recommendation-form/>

Don't forget to check out our blog offerings on our website: **Bishop Collins** writes a monthly posting and we have regular posts on leadership, Global Missions, and the implementation of our synod strategy. You can view it at <https://www.uss-elca.org/category/blog/>.

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.



Upper Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Bishop

PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837 570-524-9778 www.uss-elca.org

Upper Susquehanna Synod Events

Meeting Guidelines

The synod office has put together some guidelines for meetings in these pandemic times, particular annual meetings of congregations. Click here to see the document: <https://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Guidance-for-meetings.pdf>

December 2, 2020: Boundary Training Zoom Workshop

Pastor Diane Wheatley, who has led boundary trainings for the Allegheny Synod, will lead this training offered by the Allegheny, Upper Susquehanna, Northwest Pennsylvania, and West Virginia/Western Maryland Synods. Rostered leaders from all four of these synods are encouraged to attend.

Rostered Leaders in the ELCA are strongly encouraged to participate in a boundary training every 2 – 3 years. For those who are considering mobility, many Synods will not consider candidates who have not had a recent boundary training. This training is about helping us to have healthy churches and healthy relationships with our people.

This training will go over the basics of healthy boundaries for rostered leaders and have opportunity for review and discussion around situations we may encounter in church leadership.

Schedule

10 a.m. until noon - Session 1

noon to 1:30 p.m. – Lunch

1:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. - Session 2

Pastor Wheatley will offer time for optional conversation after the course is finished at 3:30 for those who would wish to remain on the Zoom call.

To [register](#) for this training:

- <https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/2720716>
- [Order the course workbook](#) (\$15) from Pastor Wheatley: dwheatle@twcny.rr.com (required)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Synod Office.

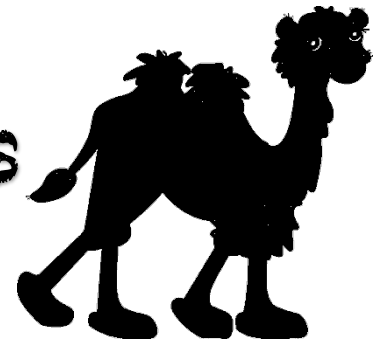
October 28, 2021: Lutheran Day at the Capital

As we continue to move through the pandemic, we look forward and invite you to mark your calendar for next year's Lutheran Day. We will gather in Harrisburg on Thursday, October 28, 2021. We have moved this annual event from the spring into the fall in prayerful anticipation that we may safely gather by then. Learn more here: <https://www.lutheranadvocacy.org/save-the-date-for-lutheran-day-2021-october-28/>

MOUNT LUTHER



Camel Tracks



November 2020



Pine 3 Gets a Facelift

With donated funds and sweat equity, Pine 3 got a makeover this summer. Some alumni staff and friends of the camp decided that 1960s paneling was not the "in thing" for Pine Village living in the 2020s. So, they bought supplies and installed knotty pine boards on the walls and ceilings in Pine 3.

The renovations give the cabin a fresh new look and provides nicer accommodations for summer campers and retreat users. Pine 3 was chosen because of its proximity to the bathhouse and because alumni staff felt that cabin could use some improvements.

We thank the 2020 Pine Renovation Crew for their hard work in transforming one of cabins. Their hope is that other groups might be inspired to donate supplies and labor to do similar projects in other cabins at camp.



Still Seats Available at Shade

On November 6, we will have our annual Evening at Shade Mountain Winery. There are still seats available at both time slots for this event.

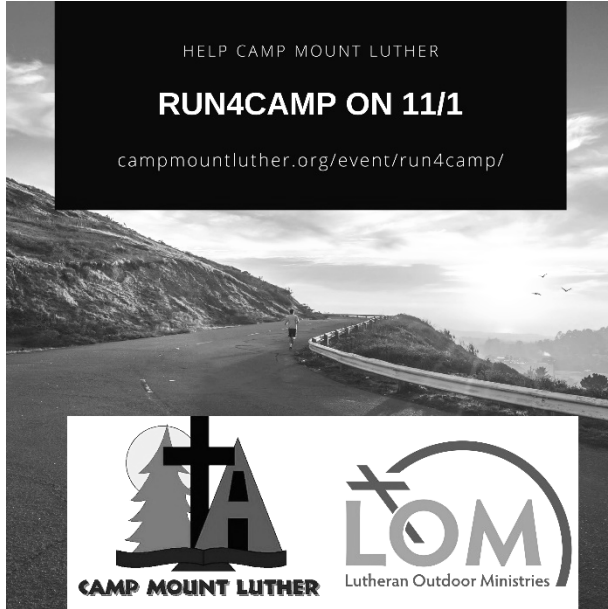
This is a fundraising opportunity to share fellowship, entertainment, and enjoy locally produced wine, all to benefit Camp Mount Luther. The menu is to include a Club Sandwich with Tortellini Salad, Chips, Dessert, and a glass of wine.

Face coverings and social distancing are expected while in the building. Guests will sit with those whom they arrive. The first seating will be from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. The second seating will be 6:30-7:30 p.m. There will be a limit of 25 people for each seating. Make your reservations by calling 570-922-1587 or email cml@campmountluther.org.

Cost is a donation to camp. Consider a donation that is equal to or greater than the food and entertainment provided. If you choose to purchase any bottles of wine that evening, a portion of the proceeds will be given to Camp Mount Luther. If you cannot make it that night, you can visit Shade Mountain Winery from November 6 to November 13 and purchase wine and indicate it is for the Camp Mount Luther fundraiser.



Run4Camp: You can still support a runner/walker/biker on our Run4Camp 5K on All Saints Day, Sunday, November 1, 2020. Go to www.lomnetwork.org/run4camp to see the list of who is participating for us and then make a donation to camp in their honor!



Summer Brochure Release Party Off for this Year

Due to the pandemic, we will not be holding a Summer Brochure Release Party this December. However, the summer schedule for 2021 is being developed and it will be shared by the end of the year. Then, be looking for some videos in early 2021 as we tell you all about our camps and what we'll need to do to run camp safely next summer. We are sad that we will not get to showcase our new programs at Christmastime like we have in the last few years, but we want to make sure everyone is safe so we'll do it virtually this year!



Staight From the Camel's Mouth

By Kyros T. Camel

It's been an interesting fall at camp, but I'm been glad to see some activity finally during this pandemic. A few folks came out for Fall Frisbee Funday on Sunday afternoons in October. We had a good response to the Whoopie Pie sale, with over 300 of those tasty treats being ordered. The camels are glad that we are able to adapt to these uncertain times.

One thing that has been certain is our camp leadership. Three terms were up for reelection this year and all three agreed to continue to serve another term. And, our officers were reelected as well. Re-elected were Rev. William Henderson of Selinsgrove, president; Nancy Wood of Williamsport, vice president; Rev. Andrew Weaver of Sunbury, secretary; Terry Gardner of Muncy, treasurer.

The synod GROW Team is working on details to have the annual GROW in the Snow synod youth retreat at Camp Mount Luther. It is now scheduled for February 19-20, 2021 with a theme revolving around scripture. More details will be coming out soon.

The camp received a \$15,000 grant from Union County through CARES Act funds. We are thankful to the Union County Commissioners for designating some of their federal funding to small businesses and non-profits in our county. They money will be used for annual operating expenses for this year.

Mark your calendars for February 7, 2021. That's the tentative date for this year's Camperson Meeting, which will be held separately since the Summer Brochure Release Party will not happen this year.



CAMP MOUNT LUTHER

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Please remember Mount Luther in your gift plan.