News

SU Candlelight Service
This year's Susquehanna University Candlelight Christmas Service is being held virtually this year. A video will be dropped on Tuesday night, December 8 here:
https://www.susqu.edu/about-susquehanna/history-and-traditions/christmas-candlelight-service

New Tax Filing Requirements for Churches
The 1099-MISC form has been used in the past to report certain payments, including non-employee compensation (NEC), to the IRS. Beginning with tax year 2020, the 1099-MISC has been redesigned due to the creation of Form 1099-NEC. Employers will no longer report non-employee compensation, such as payments to independent contractors, on Form 1099-MISC. More information may be found online here. New 1099-NEC and 1096 forms may be obtained from the IRS online here.
Click here to read more

ELCA Future Church Design Affirmed
As the world continues to change, it is important for the church to remain true to the Gospel and relevant in our time. In 2020, global pandemic, the urgent struggle for racial justice and a divisive political climate have only sharpened and renewed this church’s purpose to “activate each of us so many people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.” To do this important work, the ELCA Church Council affirmed a new Future Church design at its fall meeting November 12-14, 2020, in order to meet the current realities that we face as a church and assist us in moving beyond where we are. The following are the realities in which we currently live that are driving this process.
Click here to read more

LWR Hurricane Response
Our neighbors in Central America have been devastated by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. Our mission partner, Lutheran World Relief (LWR), has staff on the ground already responding. LWR has been in the region for decades and will continue to remain long after this disaster response. Please watch this video, pray for our neighbors in Honduras and beyond, and give at www.lwr.org/storms20.

Thursdays in Black
In early October, Presiding Bishop Eaton joined other Thursdays in Black Ambassadors from around the world in recommitting to the campaign to end gender-based violence and in mapping the campaign’s future work. Bishop Eaton and National Bishop Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have joined together to amplify this call to action in North America with a new video message for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October in the United States, November in Canada). Both bishops continue to urge their churches to spotlight the scourge of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence in their communities, especially as reported cases have spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more about how to join the campaign here.

Missionary Updates
Do you know Viking Dietrich? Have you heard the name? Pastor Viking Dietrich and his wife, Marissa, are ELCA missionaries in Berlin. Pastor Viking currently serves as Regional Representative in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Prior to the assignment for the ELCA in Germany, Pastor Viking served in the Upper Susquehanna Synod as Pastor of St. John’s Montgomery for several years. He chaired the Liberia Committee while in our synod and has a great passion for global ministry. Check out his newsletters and friend him on Facebook. See what the church is doing in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Viking is also available to Zoom with a congregation, council, youth group or Bible Study group. Email him directly to set something up: viking.dietrich@elca.org
Click here for more

Portico Message
Thank you for your responsiveness during Annual Enrollment! As a reminder, all members with ELCA-Primary health coverage will be receiving new medical ID cards for 2021. Watch your mail in late December for these new cards; however, please note that even if your card does not arrive before January 1, you will still have coverage. And, you can always print or request a new ID card via myPortico… just click on the “Care Coordinators” button under Health Coverage on your homepage.

"Not a Silent Night" Advent Study
Pastor Torodd Svensson and Pastor Kate Drefke will be co-leading a mid-week study this Advent season. The study will take place via Zoom 8:15-9:15pm on the four Wednesdays in Advent. Suitable for youth and adults, the study will consist of...
teaching, video clips and discussion in large and small groups format. Participants are encouraged to purchase the accompanying Adult Study Guide or Youth Study Guide, which will be helpful, but not necessary.

Adult study guide: https://www.amazon.com/Not-Silent-Night-Paperback-Bethlehem/dp/150187957X/ref=sr_1_3\&dchild=1\&keywords=not+a+silent+night+adam+hamilton&sprefix=Not+a+silent+n%2Caps%2C159&s=8-3

Youth study guides: https://www.amazon.com/Silent-Night-Youth-Study-Book/dp/1501815695/ref=sr_1_1\&dchild=1\&keywords=not+a+silent+night+adam+hamilton&sprefix=Not+a+silent+n%2Caps%2C159&s=8-3

Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89226218719?pwd=ucJulRpyRspVMi1GWFFdoZ2o9

Lessons and Carols for the First Sunday of Christmas

Our synod staff will provide a recorded service of Lessons and Carols for the First Sunday of Christmas. Congregations that wish to may use this service in place of their usual Sunday worship. The recording will drop on December 26 at 5:00pm on the synod’s YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Congregations are invited to participate in this service by providing recordings of hymns. Whether instrumental or vocal, by a member, a virtual choir, or otherwise, those who want to participate in this way can contact Craig Miller for instructions on how to submit a recording. Submissions must be received by December 15.

Christmas in Bethlehem

Restrictions are a bit different in the West Bank, which means there are plans for a small (45 person) worship service on Christmas Eve at the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church near Manger Square. This is an annual event, held in German, English, and Arabic, and typically attended by several hundred people, both local and international. Of course we’re all very sad that things won’t feel the same. Here’s the GOOD NEWS: we will be live-streaming the service for all to watch! The service will take place on 24 December 24 at 10:00 a.m. More information to come.

Next Zoom: January 6

The next monthly Zoom meeting with the bishop will take place at 11:00 a.m. Here’s the login information: https://www.uss-elca.org/bi-weekly-zoom-instructions/

Weekly Online Gathering for ELCA Leaders

Jill Beverlin, National Coordinator of Coaching for the ELCA, along with Jason O’Neill, Administrative and Website Support for ELCA Coaching, will hold space next week for leaders to gather, share, and just be together in this liminal time filled with both grief and hope. There will be no presentation. We will practice holding space together, similar to a support group or grief group. Jill and Jason will facilitate. For more personal matters, you may request a breakout room with a coach for up to 15 minutes during the hour-long gathering, subject to availability.

https://wo.ms/p9Gqgm-1tk

Prayers

For the following congregations in our synod and their pastors:

- First, Watsontown (Pastor James Fladland)
- Messiah, Mifflintown (Vicar Sam Leister)
- Messiah, Troxelville (Pastor Matthew Schuster)
- Grace, Berwick (Pastor Chad Hebrink)
- St. Paul, Gowen City (Interim Pastor Sarah Hershberger)
- Messiah, Clarkstown (Pastor Bev Cotner)

To make sure you receive this newsletter, please put Upper_Susquehanna_Synod@mail.vresp.com in your contact list.