United as Christ’s Disciples, we Support one another; and Serve God in the World

Videos Wanted

Congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod are invited to submit short videos to be used for this year’s Synod Assembly. During our one-day digital assembly, we’d like to feature videos showing some of the creative means by which our congregations continued to share God’s love in the past year, particularly how ministry took on new forms in response to the pandemic. Maybe it is how you did worship, continued to minister to your neighbors, or expanded your evangelism reach.

Submit videos to news@uss-elca.org by May 19, 2021, so that they might be shared at our June assembly. We ask that the video be no more 90 seconds. If you have any questions, please email the address above.

Voting members to the Synod Assembly are expected to attend their own Conference Assembly, held prior to the synod assembly. Conference Assemblies review and discuss any memorials/resolutions being proposed to the synod assembly, elect conference leaders, and conduct other business as needed by the conference. Please share the date/time/location for your own Conference Assembly with your voting members. These meetings will be held online this year and will start to acquaint voting members with the technology we will use for our digital Synod Assembly in June.

- Buffalo Valley: Sunday, April 18, 3:00 p.m.
- Juniata Valley: Sunday, April 25, 6:00 p.m.
- Middle Creek: Sunday, April 11, 1:00 p.m.
- North Branch: Sunday, April 11, 4:00 p.m.
- Tulpehocken: Sunday, April 18, 1:00 p.m.
- West Branch: Sunday, April 25, 2:00 p.m.

Early Registration Deadline

APRIL 15
Register for this summer’s programs by midnight 4/15 and get a discount

www.campmountluther.org
Flood Bucket Collection

Susquehanna Interfaith Network for Disaster Response will collect flood clean-up buckets for Church World Service for use when there is local flooding. Items in a cleanup bucket include:

1 — 5-gallon bucket with resealable lid*
5 — scouring pads
7 — sponges, assorted sizes
1 — scrub brush
1 — pkg. cleaning towels (18 reusable, like Easy Wipes®)
1 — box dry laundry detergent, 50-78 oz.
1 — liquid concentrated household cleaner (like Lysol®), 12 oz.
1 — bottle liquid disinfectant dish soap (like Dawn®), 24-28 oz.
1 — 1 pkg. clothespins, 48-50
Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.
5 — dust masks
2 pair — latex gloves (like Playtex®)
1 pair — work gloves
1 — 24 to 28 count roll heavy-duty trash bags (30-45 gallon, remove from carton)
1 — bottle insect repellent (pump, drops or lotion; not aerosol), 6-9 oz.

Please purchase all liquids in plastic bottles. Send only new, unopened materials. Put all items in the plastic bucket, packed securely to avoid damage during shipment, and seal lid with packing tape. Contact Craig Miller to arrange for pickup of buckets from your church. Deadline is May 1.

Up and Down the Valleys

The Middle Creek Conference decided to create thank you snack baskets for the chaplain’s office at both Evangelical Community Hospital and Geisinger Medical Center. The pastors wished to thank these workers for all the care they have been giving to congregational members while pastors have not been able to visit due to the pandemic.

Upper Susquehanna Global Ministry Team offers prayer intercessions for your weekly worship services or personal devotions. The mission is to provide opportunities to learn more about and uplift prayers for our ELCA global partners: Ansbach/Wurzburg in Bavaria, Lutheran Church in Liberia, Lutheran World Federation; Young Adults in Global Mission; Global Health Ministries; Camp Mount Luther; and Seafarer’s International. Click here for prayers: https://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Prayer-intercessions-2021A.docx


Have you checked out our blogs? Visit https://www.uss-elca.org/category/blog/ on the synod website to read monthly thoughts from our bishop, articles on leadership, global mission, and our strategic plan. The bishop's monthly blog for March talks about resilience this past year.

In her March column for Living Lutheran, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton reflects on the meaning behind “evangelical” in our name and the future of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: “I believe God will transform this church.” Read her column here: https://www.uss-elca.org/eaton/
Upper Susquehanna Synod Events

With warmer weather coming, and as the COVID 19 vaccine continues to roll out in our communities, our congregations have begun to think about resuming activities suspended since last spring. Bishop Collins reminds our congregations to remain mindful of guidance from the CDC and state Department of Health. These agencies continue to advise a cautious approach to any proposed activities, including mask-wearing, physical distancing, and staying home if you do not feel well or have been exposed to someone with COVID 19. Following Jesus means that we always show care for "the least of these" when making decisions.

April 15, 2021: CML Early Registration Deadline
Register for summer camp at Mount Luther by midnight on April 15, 2021, to get a discount on your summer camp registration! Or, if you bring a friend to camp who’s never been there, you and the friend (or sibling or church buddy) can both get $25 off your registration! Or first-time campers who attend the Spring Open House on May 2 can get the same discount on their summer registration! Only one discount per camper. Program information: www.campmountluther.org/summer. Register online at https://www.campmountluther.org/online-registration/

May 2, 2021: CML Spring Open House
New and former campers, family, and friends are invited to the Camp Mount Luther Spring Open House on Sunday, May 2, 2021, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. to enjoy a nice spring day at camp. Come see what it is like to be a camper, tour our facilities, ask questions, and participate in fun “camp” activities. If you are a returning camper, consider bringing a friend who has never been to camp. Want to get a taste of camp before the summer season? This event is perfect for new campers who are a little apprehensive about leaving home for the first time. First time campers who attend can get a coupon for a discount on their summer registration! To download a flyer for the event, click here: https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-Spring-Open-House-Flyer.pdf

May 10, 2021: Bishop’s Open Golf Tournament
The annual Bishop Open's Golf Classic is set for May 10, 2021, 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/2021/01/2021-Golf-Tournament-Flyer-DRAFT-2.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!

May 22, 2021: CML Spring Work Day
Practice stewardship through service at camp at Camp Mount Luther at the Annual Spring Work Day on Saturday, May 22, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We need your help getting the camp grounds and facilities ready for summer. There will be plenty to do and everyone in the family can help! Please bring supplies to do cleaning, mulching, raking, and light construction projects such as step ladders, buckets, rakes, etc. A light lunch will be served. RSVP by May 17 if staying for lunch to cml@campmountluther.org or 570-922-1587. Promote it: https://www.campmountluther.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-Work-Day-Flyer.pdf
June 19, 2021: Synod Assembly
The 2021 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly will take place digitally on June 19, 2021. The planning team is working hard to make this digital assembly as accessible and inclusive as possible - please be open and willing to serve as voting members. Registration is open. Please know that you will need to be able to use technology and/or have someone next to you to help you navigate this digital experience. All reports will again be available online. 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.

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 this 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.lutheranadvocacypa.org/save-the-date-for-lutheran-day-2021-october-28/
It is Raise the Region Time!

Camp Mount Luther is participating in The First Community Foundation Partnership of PA’s “Raise the Region” on March 10-11, 2021. It is a 30-hour fundraising event starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending the next day at 11:59 p.m. Money donated by the Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships will help stretch donations made to organizations that day. Additional monetary prizes and incentives will be awarded, too. Proceeds raised for Mount Luther go to the camp’s Annual Fund unless a donor gets in touch with the camp office to designate it for another camp cause. To be part of Raise the Region, visit www.raisetheregion.org during the event and make an online donation to camp. Running totals will be shown throughout the day at the Raise the Region website. Camp Mount Luther has participated in Raise the Region for eight years and has garnered about $119,000 in donations during this event. The camp hopes you will help us to have another successful year!

Another Way to Help CML: The Endowment Fund

The Camp Mount Luther Endowment Fund was established with hopes that it would grow enough to have a significant annual distribution that would benefit camp programs and facilities. The camp’s Development Team oversees the distribution of funds and regularly reviews its progress. At the end of 2020, the fund totaled $216,028.13. We receive about $10,000 per year in an annual distribution to our general operating fund. To donate to the endowment fund, send a check to the camp marked “Endowment.”

Early Registration Deadline Approaching

Register for summer camp at Mount Luther by midnight on April 15, 2021, to get a discount on your summer camp registration! Or, if you bring a friend to camp who’s never been there, you and the friend (or sibling or church buddy) can both get $25 off your registration! Or, first time campers who attend the Spring Open House on May 2 can get the same discount on their summer registration! Only one discount per camper. Program information at www.campmountluther.org/summer. Register online at www.campmountluther.org/online-registration/

Spring Open House

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2021 Campersons
The following persons are registered to be a camperson for this year and qualify these congregations for a special incentive of Camel Bucks for their campers to use in the camp store:

Bethlehem, Fairport, NY- Ruth Gates
Christ's United, Millmont- Barry Spangler
Christ's, Lewisburg- Thomas Stahlnecker
Messiah, Mifflintown- Kate Swailes
Messiah, New Berlin- Frances Blatchley
Salem, Selinsgrove- Eileen Stauffer
St. John, Belleville- Anne Harshbarger
St. John, Potts Grove- Lois Buck
United In Christ, West Milton- Sherry Bingaman
St. Peter, Kreamer- Vickie Brown
The Table, Bloomsburg - Erin Hayes
Trinity, Milton- Seth Reitz
Zion, Sunbury- David Reier
Zion, Turbotville- Beth Roux

Sponsors and Golfers Needed for Bishop’s Open Golf Tournament in May

The annual Bishop’s Open Golf Classic is set for May 10, 2021, beginning at 11:30 a.m. at the Susquehanna Valley Country Club in Shamokin Dam. The tournament benefits Camp Mount Luther and the camp’s annual fund.

The camp’s golf tournament committee is currently looking for hole sponsors, and golfers. If you can help, please contact the camp office at 570-922-1587 or chad@campmountluther.org. Congregations are also encouraged to become hole sponsors. This is the 16th year for this important camp fundraiser!

Straight from the Camel’s Mouth
By Kyros T. Camel

With March upon us, our thoughts turn to spring. We have been seeing some planning happening with summer camp and we are excited that plans include welcoming campers back on-site. You can read more about our plans on our website and social media.

An update: As you may have heard, the Camp Mount Luther Board decided to budget in thirds and appeal to our friends to help us meet the financial needs of our outdoor ministry. We are looking to raise $135,000 before the end of April. At the end of January, we had been gifted $57,114. Thanks to all who have helped so far.

Keep watching your social media, emails, and this newsletter for more about what is going on at camp!

Spring Work Day in May

Practice stewardship through service at camp at Camp Mount Luther at the Annual Spring Work Day on Saturday, May 22, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We need your help getting the camp grounds and facilities ready for summer. There will be plenty to do and everyone in the family can help! Please bring supplies to do cleaning, mulching, raking, and light construction projects such as step ladders, buckets, rakes, etc. A light lunch will be served. RSVP by May 17 if staying for lunch to cml@campmountluther.org or 570-922-1587.

Mount Luther takes seriously our mission from God of sharing Christ and planting seeds! We work hard to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the beauty of creation, and serve the people of Central Pennsylvania. That is done mostly through worship, study, recreation, and Christian fellowship in a place set apart by God.

2020 was our 58th year of ministry and due to the global pandemic, it was like none other in the camp’s history! Because traditional summer camp was cancelled, the camp engaged in some creative ways to still have camp activities despite not being together on-site.

Here are our top accomplishments of 2020:

#1 Committed to providing some type of camp experience this summer, twelve returning staffers were hired for three weeks to do leadership training, service work, and develop a virtual camp. Three recorded “Zoom” worships were posted online prior to the staff’s arrival on July 15. Then, Virtual CML launched on July 28, which the staff developed the two weeks prior. It was full of Facebook Live events, pre-recorded videos, and activities to do at home. They even had a Flipgrid so campers could share what they did with us. You can view all the materials at www.campmountluther.org/coronavirus.

On Sunday, August 2, staff welcomed friends for three events. Former senior high campers reunited in the afternoon and they played some Frisbee Golf. Then, a Take-Out Spaghetti Supper was held, complete with socially distanced eating outside! That evening, an outdoor worship service was at the Amphitheater, with Upper Susquehanna Synod Bishop Barbara J. Collins preaching and the staff leading a worship they planned. About 85 spaghetti suppers were sold and had about 80 (all masked) in attendance for worship.

This year’s theme at Mount Luther was “From Generation to Generation.” Campers explored the stories of familiar Bible characters and their responses to God’s call and promised faithfulness in their lives. They saw how the enduring love instilled in the promise to Abraham and Sarah continues through Old Testament characters, to Jesus, to the early church, and on to them! Through the camp’s method of studying the Bible, called “GROW Time,” staff helped campers Gather and Reflect On the Word throughout their day, even in a virtual setting. No off-site camps were held in 2020.

#2 In an immediate response to the pandemic, the camp provided activities on our website for kids to do while not in school and offered families the opportunity to come for hikes and stay at camp in a cabin or tent for a family getaway. Several families enjoyed spending time together in the outdoors.
#3 Thanks to the Graphic Hive in Williamsport, Mount Luther was able to host an online apparel store with all proceeds benefiting CML! There was a new shirt for 2020 "I Don't Get Homesick, I Get Campsick!" and other long-sleeve shirts, hoodies, tank tops, and women's apparel in lots of colors. Sales were so good that they won the company's monthly sales competition and got a dozen free shirts for our summer staff.

#4 Through the generosity of our valued donors and several grants, the camp was able to replace normal program income during this economically tough year. In addition to our friends and supporters who generously gave in 2020, we were the recipient of a CARES Grant from Union County, the benefactor of the George and Doris Robinson Golf Tournament proceeds, a federal Payroll Protection Program loan that was forgiven, and a Total Inclusion! Grant from the ELCA.

Our unaudited budget summary for 2020 included $381,642 in income and $300,324 in expenses.

#5 New staff positions in 2020 included Linda Aurand transitioning from her longtime role as full-time officer manager to part-time bookkeeper because of her retirement. Charlene Rineer, our summer assistant director, added Administrative Assistant to her title, helping in the office year-round.

#6 Had several Thrivent Action Teams do work for camp during the year, including renovations to Pine 3. The interior of that cabin was refitted with knotty pine boards to give it a more modern look.

#7 The camp participated in their eighth Raise the Region, a 30-hour online fundraising campaign, sponsored by the First Community Foundation of PA. We raise $18,610 which was given by 129 donors.

#8 In the Fall, we hosted a Whoopie Pie sale in place of the normal stand that we usually hold at the Selinsgrove Market Street Festival. We also held Frisbee Fundays on October Sundays.

#9 In a new effort sparked by the pandemic, we participated in Lutheran Outdoor Ministries’ Run4Camp. About 15 walkers, runners, and bikers did a personal 5K and raised funds for the camp.

#10 We continued several programs including our Digital First Light devotions, GROW in the Snow, Mount Luther Sunday, Bishop’s Open Golf Tournament, Dandelion Run, Evening at Shade Mountain, and sending Christmas and birthday cards to each summer camper.
**Personnel**

We are grateful to those who serve providing governance, hospitality, and quality programming and facilities.

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**Board of Directors**
- **President:** Rev. Bill Henderson
- **Vice President:** Ms. Nancy Wood
- **Secretary:** Rev. Andrew Weaver
- **Treasurer:** Mr. Terry Gardner (Synod Council Representative)

**Synod Bishop Representative:** Mr. Ty Turner

**Diocesan Bishop Representative:** Rev. Kenneth Wagner-Pizza

**Diocesan Council of Trustees Representative:** Mr. Bob Kilp

**Board Members:**
- Rev. Andrew Fitch
- Mrs. Malea Haflett
- Mr. Sam Leister
- Mr. John Knouse
- Mrs. Sandra Strother
- Mrs. Truly Zimmerman

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**Executive Diirector:** Chad Hershberger

**Site Manager:** Tom Watters

**Hospitality Manager:** Toni Gessner

**Administrative Assistant:** Charlene Rineer

**Bookkeeper:** Linda Aurand

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**Summer Ministry Team**

**Assistant Director:** Charlene Rineer

**Co-Program Directors:**
- Anne Harshbarger, Noah Roux, Tori Callahan

**Program Counselors:**
- Marie Barnard, Alex Beaver, Kalley Betz, Maddie Hunt, Joey Martin, Grace Roux, Cassidy Stumpf

**Tech Coordinator:**
- Ty Turner

**Kitchen Staff:**
- Eric Gessner
- Kyle Gessner
- Ryan Gessner
- Amanda Yoder
- Levi Yoder

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**Summer Volunteers**

Due to the pandemic, we did not have any volunteer Chaplains, Health Officers or Program Volunteers in 2020.

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**Use of Camp**

We had about 1,400 people use camp during our retreat season including:

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**Camper Stats**

A list of where our summer campers came from in 2020.

- Buffalo Valley - 0
- Juniata Valley - 0
- Middle Creek - 0
- North Branch - 0
- Tulpehocken - 0
- West Branch - 0
- Other Synods - 0
- Episcopal Diocese - 0
- Other Denominations - 0
- Confirmation Camp - 0
- Non-Church Affiliated - 0

**Top churches in 2019:**
- Trinity, McAlisterville - 16
- Trinity, Milton - 13
- Messiah, Mifflintown - 12
- Christ’s, Lewisburg - 11
- St. John’s, Lewistown - 10
- The Table, Bloomsburg - 10

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**Year-Round Staff**

- **Executive Director:** Chad Hershberger
- **Site Manager:** Tom Watters
- **Hospitality Manager:** Toni Gessner
- **Administrative Assistant:** Charlene Rineer
- **Bookkeeper:** Linda Aurand