

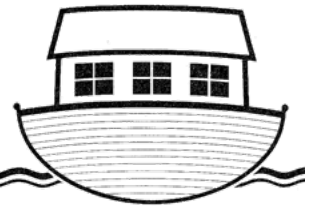


U S S A R K

Jan/Feb 2024

Ministry Stories from the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

*United as Christ's Disciples, we **Support** one another; and **Serve** God in the World*
More news and events can be at uss-elca.org/uss-ark



13 Years of Seafarers Collection

In total, 798 Seafarers Bags were loaded up into two vans to be taken to Seafarers International House in New York City in late November. Pastor Marsh Drege, executive director, said they will deliver them to seafarers who will not be home with their loved ones for Christmas. Seven synod volunteers helped to pack the bags, collected by synod congregations, into the vans at the synod office. This year marked the thirteenth year of collection, totaling 7,896 bags. More about Christmas-at-Sea: <https://www.sihnyc.org/christmas-at-sea>



Holy Closure

In December, Christ, Buckhorn (Rev. Vicky Schaffner) celebrated its final worship. The congregation turned its building over to Victory Baptist Church of Bloomsburg (Pastor Tim Perry). Remaining assets of the congregation will be shared equally between Camp Mount Luther, the Upper Susquehanna Synod, Boy Scouts, and EOS Therapeutic Riding School.



Focus on...

Young Adults in Global Mission

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program invites young adults ages 21-29 into a transformative, year-long journey in international service. As they offer themselves in service, they are shaped by the witness of our global neighbors, sharing in the journeys of companion churches and organizations around the world. Young adults serve in the spirit of accompaniment, walking alongside global companions in a manner that practices mutuality, interdependence, and solidarity.

Areas of service include:

- health and development
- congregational ministry
- human rights
- education
- homelessness
- addiction recovery
- women's issues
- children and youth

Current YAGM country programs include:

- Argentina/Uruguay
- Jerusalem/West Bank
- Mexico
- Senegal
- United Kingdom
- Central Europe

Please pray for our global partners. If you wish to join the USS Global Ministry team, email annzimmerman@hotmail.com. If you'd like to promote YAGM in your congregation, download a bulletin insert here: <https://www.uss-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/YAGM-bulletin-insert.pdf>

From Bishop Craig Miller

Among the many things on my mind as we enter the season of Lent, a few bear mentioning in this brief column. The first is the Camp Mount Luther Capital Campaign, which seeks to improve facilities for campers and others who use this wonderful place. I am excited to see this project break ground because of the generosity of this synod, our congregations, and members.



Much of our time and energy in the synod office goes into looking for ways to provide leadership and assistance to our 115 congregations. Our approximately sixty active pastors, including those who are retired but still serve as interims and Sunday supply, are being asked to take on ever-increasing burdens, and I can sense their fatigue and, sometimes, discouragement. I have tasked our Lay Ministry Institute with developing training for our congregation leaders that, along with our robust Lay Worship Leaders program, will help to alleviate the burden on our pastors so that they can focus on the mission for which God called them.

Finally, with plans for our 2024 Synod Assembly well underway, I anticipate an exciting and informative event June 14-15. This year, we will begin with a morning of workshops, fellowship, and refreshments in the Degenstein Center. Following lunch, we will begin the business of the assembly. Visitors are encouraged to attend the workshops and stay to observe the meeting, then return to congregations and share what you have seen and heard. Watch for information in Headwaters, on our Facebook page, and in other communications.



In January, Bishop Miller joined the celebration at Sonbeam Early Learning Center, a ministry of Trinity, Mcalisterville (Pastor Karen Ward). The ministry earned STAR 4 rating with Keystone STARS. Congratulations Sonbeam!

Up and Down the Valleys

Camp Mt. Luther News: Camp is accepting applications for Summer Staff. Apply at www.campmountluther.org/jobs or email chad@campmountluther.org with questions.

Candidates must possess a commitment to Christ, a passion for the outdoors, and strong leadership and teamwork skills. In January, Executive Director Chad Hershberger and Associate Director Jim Vitale represented CML at Winterfest, a Lutheran Youth event in Lancaster. Jim served as the chaplain for the event. It is hoped that we can get a group from our synod to attend next year!



The **Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly** will be held on June 14-15, 2024, at Susquehanna University. In acknowledgement of the ELCA World Hunger's 50th anniversary, our theme will be "Fed by Jesus to Feed the World." Our ELCA Representative will be Marie Ann Sliwinski, Senior Director, ELCA Building Resilient Communities. The assembly gives every congregation and member within our synod an opportunity to participate, whether you are a voting member from your congregation, a rostered leader, a Sunday School student, or just one of the folks who sits in the pew and wants to see what all the rest of the believers are up to! Voting members from each congregation will need to be identified by mid-February. Serve your church by being part of this historical event! Talk to your pastor about being your congregation's representative. Cost is \$80 before April 15, \$100 after that. Visitors cost \$15 and meals and housing are billed separately.



The Buffalo Valley Lutheran Parish (Pastor Curt Wingert) held a Christmas dinner theater for all ages on December 10. The evening featured a roast beef dinner with the trimmings and a dessert bar. The youth then presented "The Pass-IT-ON-Christmas."

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