

OTHER COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

APPALACHIAN SMALL TOWN AND RURAL TEAM (ASTaR)

The ASTaR Team is a group of individuals who have an interest in ministry issues that effect small town and rural congregations. In addition we are a partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Coalition Mission in Appalachia (ELCMA). ELCMA is a coalition of synods and institutions located in the Appalachian region.

Our team has set up several "Listening Posts" where congregations with similar ministry issues are able to gather together and share experiences. Many of these congregations have continued the dialogue on their own. These Listening Posts also help us to discover the pressing ministry issues that our congregations must face.

In 2008 we applied for a \$ 75,000 grant from the Clark Foundation and will be working in 2009 to distribute individual grants to eligible congregations.

We are always interested in new team members and congregations wanting to participate in our Listening Posts. Contact Wayne Kaufman or Glenn Simmons if you are interested.

Wayne Kaufman, chair

EASTERN CLUSTER OF LUTHERAN SEMINARIES

Introduction

Since its founding in 1995, the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (ECLS) has fostered strong collaboration between the three eastern schools, enhancing our common task of theological education for a broad spectrum of students. Major Cluster-sponsored programs include diaconal ministry formation (based at Gettysburg), a Doctor of Ministry degree (Philadelphia-based), and partnership in the Atlanta program centered in the predominantly African-American Interdenominational Theological Center (with Southern being the primary Cluster connection point). A separately incorporated entity, the Cluster is governed by a Board of Directors made up of board representatives and key academic and administrative leaders from each of the three schools. One of the three seminary presidents serves in rotation as Cluster executive director, assisted by a contracted part-time cluster coordinator. With only modest core funding from the seminaries, the Cluster has been blessed to receive nearly \$5 million in grants from foundations.

Current Collaborative Programs

- The Cluster's *One Library Under Three Roofs* links the collections at Gettysburg, Philadelphia and Columbia, providing students, faculty and other borrowers with access to a vast array of books, periodicals and e-resources.
- Vocational discernment emphases focused on young adults is carried out by means of *Project Connect*, which works in close concert with the Admissions offices of each school.
- Faculty collaboration occurs especially through the diaconal formation event and shared D.Min. A *joint faculty retreat* in March 2009 provided opportunity for the three faculties to envision additional areas where sharing might occur.
- *Theological Education with Youth (TEY)*, a program jointly sponsored by the two Pennsylvania schools, is in its 10th year of providing in-depth study, fellowship and service opportunities for junior- and senior-high young persons.
- A pioneering effort is being launched in 2009 to provide both theological and managerial/leadership education for social ministry organization staff persons. *Intersections Institute* has received grants from the ELCA, Diakon and Thrivent.

Future Cluster Directions

In the current context of economic challenges, a call has been issued to review the Cluster governance structure with an eye toward achieving greater efficiencies. Concurrently, as each school engages in "belt-tightening," Cluster conversations will explore options for additional areas of shared administrative and pedagogical endeavors.

With Appreciation

The Cluster is grateful for support to theological education and our seminaries from the synods and churchwide organization. As he concludes his service as dean at Southern, appreciation is expressed to Dr. Michael Root.

The Rev. Glenn Ludwig, cluster board chair
The Rev. Marcus Miller, executive director

ELCA MISSION INVESTMENT FUND

The Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA continues to serve this synod by providing vital loans for capital projects to new mission congregations, established congregations, and ELCA-related

ministries. MIF is able to fund these loans through the sale of investments to ministries and congregation members.

More than 800 MIF loans totaling nearly \$500 million are at work today in ELCA ministries throughout the United States, the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean.

In the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, 99 congregations and ministries currently have Mission Investment Fund loans totaling \$3,721,743, while many individuals, ministries and this synod have investments in the fund totaling \$7,759,743 (as of December 31, 2008).

MIF serves ELCA ministries. In addition to the ministry loans and investments that it offers, the fund provides consulting services to ELCA congregations through its church building consultants and staff architects. The consultants review plans for building projects and assist with church construction financing. Staff architects provide initial schematic design proposals that congregations can take to local architects. The consultants' and architects' services are provided at no charge. MIF's area representatives are available to meet with congregations and ELCA-related ministries related regarding the loan and investment opportunities offered by the fund.

Has your congregation invested? Have members of your congregation invested? Join the thousands of individuals, ELCA congregations, ELCA-related ministries, and synods – including the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod – that are earning interest on their investments as they help to build the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Your participation enables the fund to continue this vital ministry. A variety of fixed- and adjustable-rate investment opportunities are available and may be opened with initial investments of as low as \$5. Information on investments and ministry loans is available at www.elca.org/mif and through the fund's representatives listed below who serve this synod.

Thank you for your support of and participation in the Mission Investment Fund. It is a joy to work in partnership with you for the advancement of God's kingdom.

Mark Wimmer, area representative
Jeff Spann, church building consultant

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN COALITION FOR MISSION IN APPALACHIA (ELCMA)

ELCMA "*Connects and Equips God's People for Christ's Mission in Appalachia*" in various ways:

- Grant writing seminars offered to congregational and community leaders equip participants to develop funds continuing the ministries needed in their neighborhoods.
- An advocacy agenda came from the people – A Sustainable Living Campaign connects and equips individuals and congregations to make choices that protect the environment.
- Writing confirmation curriculum with a volunteer task group connects small congregations to affordable material equipping their youth with the fundamentals of Lutheranism.
- The Handbook for Small Congregations connects congregations to ideas that are tried and true, designed for the rural and small places, equipping leaders for ministry.
- The Glenn Heasley Award in Appalachian Ministry equips Appalachian leaders with a sabbatical grant allowing them to re-connect with their families in whatever way they choose.
- The Don Roth Award spotlights congregations who are reaching out to their communities in meaningful and sensitive ways encouraging others to connect with these models of ministry.

The annual Appalachian Assembly connects rural and small ministry leaders to each other and equips them to continue their work refreshed and renewed.

We invite you to join us in our ministry by:

- PRAYING for the ministries of ELCMA using Prayer Invitations found at our website.
- Attending our annual Appalachian Assembly announced at our website each January.
- Joining ELCMANEWS and connecting with our network of rural and small town leaders by registering at our website on the home page.
- Learning about the issues at the coordinator's corner and the advocacy agenda of the website.
- Championing the causes you believe in and contact us at the website for additional helps.
- Sponsor ELCMA trainings at your congregations by linking to us through the website.
- Joining a servant opportunity within the Appalachian Region at the volunteer link of the website.
- Using GoodSearch and GoodShop – just hop on through the link on our home page.
- Becoming an Appalseed supporter by clicking on the "ways to give" button of the website.
- Volunteering in the ELCMA office as special projects arise or offering to represent ELCMA within your synod at a special event by contacting us at the website, www.elcma.org.

- Don't have access to the web? Call us at the ELCMA office, 724-463-8422, and we will connect you and equip you to participate with us.

Learn more about ELCMA through your synod representatives to our ministry. They include: Bishop Samuel Zeiser, Revs. Wayne Kaufman, Michele Kaufman, Glenn Simmons, Kurt Garbe, Tony Pagotto, John Houck, David Heckler, Chip Fairchild, John Hazel, Mr. John Potoskie, and Ms. Mary Simmons. Thank you for your continued partnership in this ministry.

Dory Campbell, ELCMA coordinator

LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA (LAMPa)

Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God's love for all that God has created . . .

LAMPa advocates in the places of power, where decisions are made, for those whose voices have been muted by oppression and economic injustice. The General Assembly and other state government agency policymakers are central focal points for this advocacy.

Social statements and messages of the ELCA as well as our Lutheran theological understanding of the role of government are the foundation for LAMPa's advocacy. Two primary categories are at the center of LAMPa's public policy advocacy priorities for the 2009-2010 legislative session:

- Poverty/Hunger
- Health/Health Care/Human Services

No amount of direct advocacy with policymakers in Harrisburg can equal the power of voters...in LAMPa's case, the voices of Lutherans who take seriously their faith as they seek justice for all people. By sharing resources, conducting adult issue forums and doing advocacy training, LAMPa seeks to equip Lutherans in PA to become advocates. Primarily, this happens through *ACTIONET*.

- *ACTIONET* is a growing network of Lutherans who take seriously their role as "citizens with faith." They write, call, and visit legislators to share their commitment to the basic worth of all people and to the responsibility of government to serve the common good. *ACTIONET* is central to how Lutheran advocacy happens in PA. Contact the LAMPa office (www.lamp.org) to sign up, and pass the word around to friends and fellow congregants!

YEAR IN REVIEW

- LAMPa collected over 1,000 signed letters from Lutherans about the importance of addressing the issue of hunger with increased dollars in the state budget.
- Over 150 Lutherans gathered in Harrisburg on April 9, 2008 for Lutheran Day at the Capitol.
- LAMPa staff expanded to include a full time Advocacy Developer to increase LAMPa's equipping presence at gatherings of Lutherans across the state.
- LAMPa worked to more fully interact with all our various partners in ministry.
- New initiatives in 2009 include: The LAMPa Ambassador Ministry – LAMPa's way of facilitating 1 to 1 relationships between all 253 State Legislators and individual Lutherans!

A word of gratitude to the Northeastern PA Synod for its financial support, for the many years of vision and commitment to justice, and the leadership of LAMPa Public Policy Council members, Judith Gifford and Kenneth Miller.

In 2009, LAMPa celebrates 30 years of public policy and advocacy ministry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Thanks be to God for our partnership in advocacy ministry with and for the poor, vulnerable, disenfranchised, and for all of God's creation!

Marissa Harris, Advocacy Developer

LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Our annual meeting was held in one of the areas where Lutherans first settled in the Delaware Valley, a short distance from the city of Chester, originally settled by the Lutheran Swedes and Finns, and the site of the Swedish Upland Court. From the time of William Penn, Quakers settled the area in the south and Germans in the north.

This has been another good year for the Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania. But it has not been without its challenges, especially in regard to our *Periodical*. Our membership continues to age showing a small decline, but interest and enthusiasm continues strong as ever. Our finances are stable. We are engaged in new projects. Over the past year we have again learned about and celebrated the ministries of several historical congregations in Eastern Pennsylvania. We have seen how the church continues to make an impact on our society. Some historic congregations are now surrounded by suburban

development quite different from when they were organized centuries ago.

We began the year with our Winter Happening luncheon at Good Shepherd Hospital, Allentown, on January 22, 2008. At that meeting we learned about the hospital, which grew from humble beginnings with the vision of Lutheran pastor John Raker and 50 cents, to be, 100 years later, one of the leading rehabilitation hospitals in the country. On Sunday, April 27, we visited St. John's, Richlandtown to celebrate their 200th Anniversary. We visited both the Lutheran congregation and the UCC congregation across the street, which is still in an original building. On August 16, our Summer Pilgrimage took us to Zions, Old Zionsville in Lehigh County, celebrating 250 years. We also visited the Dillingersville School, where Lutheran, Reformed and Mennonite worship services were first held and where Henry Muhlenberg visited. As a result of our visit to (Advent) Old Goschenhoppen last year, a confirmation class visited St. Paul's in Allentown to participate in the Soup Kitchen and to meet with the homeless. They were hosted by a group of "homeless" individuals who served them lunch and answered their questions. Our annual meeting was held October 25, 2008 at St. Matthew's, Chester Springs, to celebrate their 175th anniversary.

In addition to our traditional "Happenings" and "Pilgrimages", we continue working to produce and publish a *Guide to Colonial Lutheran Sites and Churches in Eastern Pennsylvania*. The book spans a period from 1638 to 1776. So far over 175 sites have been identified and are being researched. Work is progressing a bit more quickly now since we received a \$5,000 grant from the State of Pennsylvania to pay for the printing of the guide. We have unfortunately not been able to produce an issue of the *Periodical* yet this year. This year we lost to death three prominent members of the society, Fred Marles, who served the Board for many years and the church at large in many capacities; the Rev. Dr. John Reumann, who along with his wife Martha have been long-standing supporters of the work of the Society; and the Rev. Dr. Robert Marshall, Honorary Board Member and former President of the Lutheran Church in America.

To all of you who come faithfully to our meetings and events, you are the heart and soul of the society. Thank you all for caring about the rich Lutheran heritage, which we have inherited in Eastern Pennsylvania. You bring the church alive today.

Richard B. Baumann, president.

LUTHERAN PLANNED GIVING OF CENTRAL AND NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Lutheran Planned Giving of Central and Northeastern Pennsylvania brings together the ministry partners in our area along with the churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to promote charitable giving. As the Executive Director of Lutheran Planned Giving and a charitable gift planner for the ELCA Foundation, I am ready to provide donor education, assist donors with their charitable gift planning, work with congregations as they establish a mission endowment fund, and assist congregations to grow their endowment fund. These services are available to any Lutheran congregation or ministry without charge or obligation.

In these unprecedented and unsettling financial times, charitable giving may seem a luxury that could easily be eliminated from one's budget. However, the need for charitable giving remains high. Whether it means a hot meal and shelter for the homeless, a bed in a nursing home for someone who cannot otherwise afford it, more affordable education, an outdoor camping experience to help grow faith, or a place to worship on a Sunday morning, your gifts can make a difference. One of the goals of the Lutheran Planned Giving program is to encourage folks to include charitable giving as part of their estate plan. And a second goal is to encourage people to remember their congregation and other favorite church ministries in those gifting plans.

For the record, I am continuing the process of visiting all the conferences and/or mission districts of the four synods I serve. I conducted 15 Legacy Seminars and made 22 mission endowment consults helping congregations establish endowment funds or tune up an existing fund. I made 192 donor calls which resulted in 45 irrevocable gifts totaling \$318,719 and 1 revocable gift for \$50,000. In my service area, I also assisted many congregations and institutions to invest in the Pooled Trust Fund A, which is a balance fund investment managed by the ELCA available to any ELCA related ministry.

In 2008 the ELCA provided several training opportunities for me. First, the regional gift planners and the senior staff of the Foundation of the ELCA met twice for staff training. I attended the annual educational conference of the National Committee on Planned Giving (now the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning). Also, I am a member of the Planned Giving Council of Central PA, a local chapter of the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning. In 2008 I attended 4 educational seminars presented by the Planned Giving Council.

Finally, thank you very much for your support. Your synod, 18 other ministries, and the ELCA underwrite the Lutheran Planned Giving Program. Without your financial support, words of wisdom and encouragement, and especially your prayers, I would not have been able to accomplish what I did. Your support is essential to the success of this program. For more information about the Lutheran Planned Giving Program or to schedule a Legacy Seminar, please contact me at 570-374-2044 or kramerga@ptd.net.

Gregory A. Kramer, executive director

PENNSYLVANIA LUTHERAN NETWORK

The PLN includes the seven synods located within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and their congregations, four colleges and universities, two seminaries, eighteen social ministry organizations, eight camps, and all campus ministries throughout the state.

The network provides partners in ministry the opportunity to grow in their knowledge of one another, to support one another's specific ministries, and to develop cooperative ventures to further the ministry of the Lutheran Church on the territory of the state.

The PLN gathers annually in assembly. The 2009 PLN Assembly was held at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Radisson Penn Harris Convention Center, Camp Hill, PA. The theme of the assembly was "Vocation in These Times". The key presenters for the assembly were Robert Sitze and Sally Simmel. Participants at the assembly discussed the importance of our efforts, individually and collectively, in these times of economic hardship and governmental change.

The PLN Planning Council has formed two task groups to facilitate discussions among ministry partners 1) concerning the continuing interest of the Lutheran understanding of vocation and the impact of that understanding upon our ministries and 2) the importance and influence of our identity as Lutheran ministries.

More information about PLN is available at www.palutherannetwork.org.

Ralph E. Jones, convener of the planning council

POCONO AREA LUTHERAN MINISTRY (PALM)

2008-09 has been a busy time for the PALM Board.

In the new synod staffing pattern, the Rev. Glenn Simmons no longer is a staff person of our synod relating to PALM. First of all we wish to THANK Glenn for all the years he has related to this ministry and the wonderful leadership he gave to the board over those years. He was the face of leisure ministry in the Pocono area. He related to congregations assisting with the Leisure Ministry, found summer workers, trained them, related to the Pennsylvania Council of Churches on behalf of our ministry, and worked diligently behind the scenes to make certain everything that was supposed to happen, did. Did you canoe on the Delaware River with Glenn? He led more trips down that river on our behalf than you might expect relating to the individuals who saw the beauty of the Delaware on such a trip. So it is with some sorrow that we wish Glenn well on the new endeavors to which Bishop Zeiser has called him.

What's happened to PALM? Well our plans led us to the Pocono Mission District where it was decided that the council wants to try to continue the ministry that has been part of the region since pastors Graham Rinehart and Don Henderschedt led the ministry over 30 years ago. The PALM Board officially no longer exists, but we now are a committee of the Pocono Mission District. Plans are under way for campground ministry and canoe trips again this summer. Please keep us in your prayers as we see what the future might bring. This will be the last official report the synod will receive from us, but we hope as you vacation in the Pocono area in future years, you will still know that Lutherans are doing ministry in leisure recreation sites.

See you this summer.

Lynn Rothrock, chair of the PALM committee

REGION 7

Region 7 is the "meeting point" for the six synods of the ELCA located in the Northeast and the non-geographical Slovak-Zion synod, with the church-wide expression of the ELCA based in Chicago. Located on the campus of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, the regional office seeks to enhance relationships and work among the partner synods, the seminary, the churchwide office of the ELCA, and other ministries located on our territory. We do this by working with the bishops and other leaders to accomplish ministry across the synod lines.

In 2008 the Region 7 office supported the mission of the ELCA in the Northeast in the following areas:

- Candidacy - participation in 25 synod candidacy meetings (in six synods), facilitation of Theological Review Panels at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for candidates coming to the ELCA from other traditions, convening the annual consultation for candidacy leaders, offering ongoing training and support to synod staff and candidacy committees, working with the staff at LTSP to educate students about the various steps of the candidacy process.
- Coordinating First Call Assignment for the region.
- Coordinating and directing the Institute for Congregational Ministry (our regional continuing education event for first call leaders).
- Coordinating the annual regional gathering for bishops' staff.
- Coordinating a retreat for the bishops of the region.
- Coordinating gatherings of Christian Education and Lifelong Learning networks.
- Coordinating Mission Support Consultations for the churchwide office with the synods of the region.
- Facilitating the registration and arrangements for the Board of Pensions Pre-retirement meetings.

2008 was a year of transition in our region, as two new bishops were elected. The regional staff assisted in orientation for them and for new staff as they take office.

Leadership in Region 7 is provided by the steering committee: the Rev. Bruce Davidson, chair; Bishop David Strobel; the Rev. Mark Wimmer, treasurer; the Rev. Beth Anderson; the Rev. Nancy Brown.

Peggy Wuertele, coordinator

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

The three expressions of the Women of the ELCA (Congregational Units, Synodical and Churchwide) are active in ministries that promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world. Our women advocate for those that cannot. They are diligent with their financial gifts that are used for grants to seminarians and to social organizations whose needs compliment the mission of WELCA and the support of World Hunger and Disaster Response. Congregational Units continue to support the needs of LWR, brought on by natural disasters, through their donations of health and school kits, baby layettes and quilts 2008 was

our Triennial Convention in Salt Lake City. This is the event where a new churchwide board is elected, constitutional changes and memorials are introduced, followed by a Gathering with workshops, introductions of new material, and a time to connect with over 2000 other Women of the ELCA from all over the country. It is a time of excitement, of support to others' needs in a variety of ways, a time of song and praise as we worship the one God of our being.

Within the Synod there are Spring and Fall Cluster Events. The suggested programming for this Spring is based on our Journey to Health and Wellness and is entitled "Feet - How Firm is your Foundation". The Fall theme, "Going Green", reminds us of our responsibility as caretakers and good stewards of God's creation. Our current stewardship emphasis is directed to the needs of the Delaware River Keepers.

The theme for our Fall Learning Event, held in October, was "Discovering Your Bold". We learned how to exemplify our boldness in prayer and in our advocacy, caring, and teaching of others. At the conclusion, we were invited to write our own personal purpose statement and read it together as part of the closing litany.

Our Spiritual Growth Retreat, March 7, 2009, "Lessons for Today's Disciples", led us through the steps of a "growth process" of what it means to be a disciple. We are to study diligently, pray constantly, testify boldly, serve creatively, gather faithfully, give generously and worship wholeheartedly. We should keep our eyes on Jesus and regard the process as an adventure.

Our 20th Annual SWO Convention will be held on June 20, 2009 at Allegheny Lutheran in Knauers. We have exciting focus groups planned, to celebrate this milestone, and a special Young Women's Program, led by Pr. Randeale Albers, concluding with a pizza party. We invite women of all ages to be part of a group of women dedicated to acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ Yesterday, Today and Forever.

Patricia A. Reitnauer, president