



MUHLENBERG,  
MALLS, and MISSION

## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA and LIFT (Lutherans in Faith Together)

June 17-18, 2011

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA

### Highlights of the 2011 Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod met in assembly on June 17 and 18 at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. The synod **LIFT** (Lutherans in Faith Together) event and the LYF (Lutheran Youth Fellowship) assembly met in conjunction with the synod assembly.



Voting members heard reports from all the synod ministry teams, organizations, and the officers of the synod. Meals were shared, concerts were enjoyed, and learning happened in a variety of LIFT workshops.

Bishop Zeiser led assembly participants through the business of the synod, which included adoption of resolutions on preventing bullying, harassment and related violence, encouraging positive economic investments in Palestinian projects and businesses that support peace, and urging members to take the "Don't Bottle It Up! Pledge." Elected to the synod council at the assembly were Pr. Jeffrey Butz, Sr. Ramona Daily, Pr. Gerald Kulp, Daisy Marin, and Leslie Wagner. Karen Matthias-Long was elected to the board of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.



Highlights of the two-day gathering included the enthusiastic participations of the youth attending the LYF assembly and the signing of the agreement between Muhlenberg College and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.



Dr. Jon Paul of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia presented "Muhlenberg, Malls, and Mission." He drew comparisons

between malls and churches in this 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.



David Swartling, Secretary of the ELCA, brought greetings from Presiding Bishop Mark Hansen. Mr. Swartling began his address by announcing that it was a difficult time for the Lutheran

Church, with many diverse opinions and the disagreements about the interpretation of scripture. As listeners nodded in agreement, he revealed that he was discussing the Lutheran Church of 300 years ago. Mr. Swartling reminded the assembly of the interconnectedness of congregations, synods, and the ELCA, all working together and celebrating that we are "Freed in Christ to Serve."

Wonderful worship services were held each day as the voices of the approximately 800 people present raised their voices in prayer and song. Remembering the call to serve others in Christ's name, participants offered several thousand dollars to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and the ELCA Malaria Initiative.

Throughout the sessions, the assembly was honored to have present Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg himself. (He did look suspiciously like Pastor Carl Shankweiler!)

Participants acknowledged Muhlenberg's 300 years by singing "Happy Birthday" to him, inviting him back to future assemblies.

