

SYNOD NEWS

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

August 2007



Lutherans in Faith Together What a LIFT!



Mix together 720-some Lutherans of all ages from congregations in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, a delightfully warm, sunny day, a beautiful college campus, chapel concerts, speakers, workshops, games, music, and more and what do you get? A big **LIFT!**

The long-awaited **LIFT** (Lutherans in Faith Together) event was held on the Muhlenberg College campus on Saturday, June 9, 2007.



The day began early (7:30 a.m.) for over 40 people who walked the

perimeter of the campus, raising \$1,257 for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

By 8:30 a.m. *Bread for the Journey*, a musical group from Minneapolis, engaged participants in singing in Muhlenberg's Life Sports Center.

The official opening came with the welcome from Bishop David Strobel and Muhlenberg College President Randy Helm.



Pastor Robin McCullough, from the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, reported on the Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. She showed a poignant video that demonstrated the need to continue the clean-up and reconstruction of homes and lives that have been forever changed by that disaster.

After a rousing, emotional keynote by Bart Campolo, participants scattered to areas around the campus where they engaged in a variety of activities.

The Children's Program for ages K-Grade 6 explored Bible stories with Tracy Radosevic, a nationally known biblical storyteller. The children made puppets and other crafts that reinforced their learnings.



At the same time, some teens and adults attended workshops while others played outdoor games. Some chose to sit in the beautiful Muhlenberg College chapel to hear bell choir, organ, vocal, and choral concerts.



Still others enjoyed roaming the campus and engaging in conversation with some visitors who appeared from our Lutheran history.

Martin and Katie Luther, J.S. Bach, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, two ELCA deaconesses (Sister Gunnel Sterner and Sister Janet Stump) — even Davey and Goliath were at hand for the day.

The teenagers in attendance had a special lunch with Bart Campolo, then listened to a concert in the Red Door Café by SWiM, a music group from



Emmanuel Lutheran in Emanuelsville.

After lunch, more workshops, concerts, games, and conversation (and an ice cream treat), the afternoon came to a close with a Celebration of Lutherans in Faith Together in the Life Sports Center.

Evaluations were so overwhelmingly positive that people had a hard time saying how it could be made better. One person suggested that "the next time you have popsicles for a snack, have napkins."



A big thank you goes to the **LIFT** Planning Committee who spent two years planning for this wonderful event: Nancy Bleam, Pr. Peter Bredlau, Liz Charles, Ed Davis, Elizabeth Elterich, Marilyn Estrella, Pr. Herb Gifford, Judy Gifford, Pr. William Horn, Pr. Tom Irwin, Pr. Laura Klick, Terry Lieb, Daisy Marin, Karen Matthias-Long, Ken Miller, Ruth Miller, Pr. Mike Reist, Scherlene Schatz, Pr. Dave Searing, Pr. Laura Stoneback, Leslie Wagner, Pam Wallace, Tom Yenser, Ed Zinn, and Dale Zmijewski.

A Faith-Lifting Day

A popular church bulletin board saying invites people to "Come in and have your faith lifted!"

This is what happened for those 700+ of us who attended the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod's **LIFT** event on Saturday, June 9.



My experiences in two well-led workshops were indeed "faith-lifting." The first, "Getting Dramatic about Hunger," had participants enacting a drama from "Hunger and Hope" by Carl H. Billings, Jr, emphasizing the church's mission in aiding hungry people.

Then we were challenged to use stories about hunger ministries in our own dramas. In a short time we planned dialogues, short skits, and other dramatic presentations.

Another workshop, "Faith and Work in Our Lives," involved thinking of ways we can grow in various "arenas" of life: home, work, church, community.

We discussed how our faith in God enables us to care for ourselves, others, and the world around us.

As we shared faith experiences, we were reminded that a church grows via the laity and what we do during our workday hours.

My sincere thanks to all who worked so hard to make **LIFT** an inspiring day. Let's plan to be up**LIFT**ed again!

Elaine Molnar



2007 Churchwide Assembly

Living in God's amazing grace: Thanks be to God!

August 6-11

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America begins with worship on Monday, August 6, 2007, and concludes Saturday evening August 11, 2007. Follow all the happenings at the assembly online at www.elca.org/assembly/.