

# SYNOD NEWS

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

October 2009

## Reflections on Churchwide Assembly Decisions

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Since my return from the churchwide assembly in Minneapolis, questions and comments have come to me about the assembly's decisions, particularly the approval of recommendations on ministry policies.

The policies approved by the assembly allow congregations *that choose to do so* to 1) recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships; and 2) call pastors and other rostered leaders who live in such relationships. Congregations are *allowed* to do so; they are *not required* to do either of these.



Varied, deeply-held responses to the decisions include anger, confusion, relief, and gratitude. I have been encouraged by the faith-centered words used to express these sentiments by people across the spectrum of responses.

As we move into the weeks ahead, I hope that members of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod will continue to share their questions and comments with me. Others on the synod staff are likewise open to conversation with you about what has happened and what lies ahead. Furthermore, you can go online to [www.elca.org/assembly](http://www.elca.org/assembly) to access valuable print and video resources that will help you learn more about what happened at the churchwide assembly.

Above all, let us be diligent in our prayers for one another.



It is important to know that no changes have yet taken place in the ministry policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Time and prayerful

consultation are necessary in order to develop the policies. One thing is clear: the final decision about calling a pastor or other rostered leader will remain in the hands of congregations.

As I visited congregations across this synod during my first year as bishop, I have observed your faithful witness to Jesus Christ. Your witness convinces me

that the Holy Spirit stirs in our congregations, week in and week out. I am therefore confident that the Spirit will guide us through this time of discernment and bestow on us the peace that passes all understanding.



The ministries and the mission of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod will not wither away because of one decision. The faith roots of this synod are strong and they run deep, and they will nourish future harvests of witness and service. For Jesus' sake, I will continue to call you to spread the seeds of God's love across the fourteen counties of this synod.

Your servant in Christ,  
Samuel Zeiser



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

# Upcoming Events

## Let Your Light Shine

The 22nd Annual Lutheran Youth Fellowship Assembly

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



November 13-15, 2009

Pinebrook Bible Conference and Retreat Center  
East Stroudsburg, PA

**Youth in grades 9-12 and adult advisors**

All materials, including the registration form, are available online at [www.godslove.org/youth/lyfassembly.htm](http://www.godslove.org/youth/lyfassembly.htm).

Completed registration form, medical form, and \$120 per participant are due **by October 15, 2009**. Registrations postmarked after October 15 will be accepted on a space available basis at \$145 per person. Groups of 3 or more must be accompanied by an adult.

Check out the pictures from the 2008 LYF Assembly at [www.godslove.org/youth](http://www.godslove.org/youth)



Theological Education with Youth  
Affirmation of Baptism Festival

*To Live Among God's Faithful People*

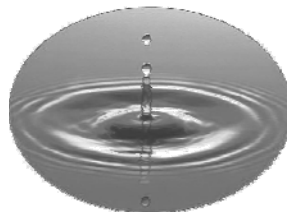
**Saturday, October 24, 2009**

**9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

For more information, go to

[www.theologicaleducationwithyouth.com](http://www.theologicaleducationwithyouth.com)



## A Bold Woman's **Ripple** Effect

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod  
Women of the ELCA

### Fall Learning Event

**Saturday, October 10, 2009**

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
45 North Reading Avenue, Boyertown, PA

The event begins at 8:30 a.m. with coffee, conversation, and registration, and ends around 3:00 p.m. A light luncheon will be served (included with the \$15 registration fee).

For more information and a registration form, click the link for the latest issue of *The Flame* on the synod website ([www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org)) or contact your congregational WELCA president.



**book of faith**  
Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

## Learning Ministries Day 2010

**Saturday, January 23, 2010**

Atonement Lutheran Church, Wyomissing

Keynote Speaker: **Dr. Rolf A. Jacobson**



## 2010 Synod Assembly

**June 18-29, 2010**

Wachovia Arena

Wilkes-Barre, PA