

Reports of Agencies



BEAR CREEK CAMP

Explore, celebrate & grow in God's creation!

Greetings from Bear Creek Camp the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry for the Northeast and Southeast Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA.

The summer of 2013 was a great one at Bear Creek Camp!

- For the first time in 8 years our summer camp attendance increased! We saw a 12% increase in campers for a total of 709.
- 27 Summer staff members did an excellent job of showing and sharing the Gospel through activities, Bible studies, games, team building moments and having fun!
- Campers, parents and chaplains were very encouraging of the programmatic changes that took place.
 - o Among the comments we received:
 - *The counselors were amazing, the kids loved the program and all the changes made.* - Parent
 - *We now have a Christian camp where faith is a central daily aspect of camp, and singing is a regular part of camp life.* - Chaplain
 - *Just got home from an amazing week at Bear Creek!! The best week I've ever had...and that's saying something! Apparently there have always been daily themes and verses but we never learned them in previous years! It just made the week more God-focused. Wow everything was just great!* – Camper
- Our Church Day Camp program continues to grow from 4 in 2012, 5 in 2013 and 7 in 2014.
- With 138 campers, session 7 was the largest session since 2005.
- We saw the largest percentage of new campers (39%) since 2005.
- The highest amount of “Try Campers” experienced BCC since 2002.

The Summer of 2014 promises to be even better!

Thank you Northeast and Southeast PA Synods and congregations for your ongoing support of the ministry at Bear Creek Camp. We are grateful to work in partnership with each of you and to be an extension of your ministries at our location in the Pocono Mountains. The enthusiasm for the ministry of Bear Creek Camp is spreading we are very excited about the months and years to come.

Our associate director, Pete Smith, and I have been very busy visiting congregations to promote BCC and our summer programs. If you are interested in a visit, please contact us after our summer season ends and we will be happy to find a date that works.

Please continue to pray for Bear Creek Camp this summer as we have a great time exploring, celebrating and growing in God's creation.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Scharnhorst

Executive Director

Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia **Letter from the President to Synod Assemblies**

Earlier in 2014 there was a news story about twin girls from South Korea who were separated at birth twenty-five years ago, and who amazingly discovered one another through YouTube. One of the twins was raised in the United States, and the other was raised in France, but through a chance experience, the two have reunited after a quarter century apart. One twin saw the other in a YouTube video, and thought that the two looked very much alike. As they began communicating with one another, they realized the similarity of their stories. DNA testing confirmed that they are indeed twins, and now they are catching up on their twenty-five years apart. I am a twin myself. As with most twins, my twin brother and I have a lot in communion. Even though we live in different states and have different vocations, we look alike, we sound alike, and we have many similar interests. Stories such as the one above are fascinating as they remind us that even though twins can be separated by the miles, often their similarities will manifest themselves, and finding one another can become a passion.

While the Ministeriums of Pennsylvania and New York were not twin Synodical structures (the Pennsylvania Ministerium was organized in 1748 and the New York Ministerium was organized in 1786), nonetheless, they are related in many ways (through the preparatory work by Henry Muhlenberg's son Frederick, who served for a time in New York City, and John Kunze, who served in both Philadelphia and New York, and whose work in the Pennsylvania Ministerium influenced his work in organizing the New York Ministerium). The archives of the two eighteenth-century Lutheran Ministeriums were maintained as separate collections, even after the organization of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia in 1979 brought the archives of the other Synods of the Northeast Region (New England, Upstate New York, New Jersey, Southeastern Pennsylvania, and Northeastern Pennsylvania, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia) under one roof. Nonetheless, like those twin sisters separated at birth, our ecclesiological DNA is the same, and over the years there had been a passionate longing to bring together the archives of the two oldest Lutheran Ministeriums in the United States.

Now, thanks be to God, as was reported in the Advent 2013 issue of the *Archives Advocate*, the archives of both eighteenth-century Ministeriums are housed together! We are happy to report to the Synod Assemblies of the Northeast Region that the archives of all the geographic Synods of Region Seven are housed together at the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia. In 2013, upon the recommendation of the Metro NY Bishop, Archivist, Archives Committee, and Synod Council, the Metropolitan New York Synod has agreed to come on board as an Affiliated Synod of LACAP. The Metro Synod Archivist, John Daggan, is now an Affiliated Director of LACAP, and Metro NY Archives Board member Jack Martz is now a Non-Affiliated Director as well. This bringing together of sister archives is a major development within Northeast Lutheranism that we can all celebrate.

If you would like to see our new accessions, or research anything related to the collections of the Lutheran Archives Center, or if you would just like to come by and look at the treasures of Northeastern Lutheranism housed at your Regional Archives, please stop by for a visit. We thank you for our continued partnership as well as for your prayers and contributions.

In Christ,
J. Francis Watson
(The Rev. Dr.) J. Francis Watson
President, LACAP Board of Directors

LUTHERAN CHARITIES 2013

Thank you to the many individuals and congregations that supported the Lutheran Charities Agencies again this past year through contributions of time and resources.

The challenge has been to focus on ways individuals & congregations can become aware of the outstanding work of the Lutheran social ministries in the communities of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod and to become involved.

The 2013 Lutheran Charities SteepleChase Bike Ride and Walk was held Saturday, June 22, with over 100 bikers and walkers. A special thank you to the people at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Audubon who hosted the ride. We also thank the people from the churches along the bike route; St. Matthew in Chester Springs, St. John in Phoenixville, Advent in Harleysville, and Augustus in Trappe who provided rest and refreshment for the riders. The walkers and bike riders on the trail were hosted by volunteers representing the agencies. Thank you to everyone who participated.

The bike ride wandered throughout Chester and Lower Montgomery Counties. Walkers, individuals and families and bikers, joined us on the Schuylkill Trail near Audubon.

A special thank you to the Advisory Committee and the Bike Ride committee for working with the coordinator in providing support for the activities of the appeal.

We are grateful for the continued support of the work of our Social Ministry Organizations through congregational giving, individuals giving through United Way, the Christmas appeal and the SteepleChase Bike Ride and Walk.

Soon you will be learning more about the NEW Lutheran Charities, which will continue to support the same social ministry organizations doing God's work with our hands—Diakon, KenCrest, Liberty Lutheran, Lutheran Settlement House and Silver Springs—Martin Luther School, all transforming people's lives in the spirit of Lutheran caring.

LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania continues to hold four board meetings each year and conducts three to four historical pilgrimages each year for its members to churches and institutions of historical interest. Officers for 2013 are listed at the end of this report.

In 2013 we visited St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Allentown, St. Luke's Evan. Lutheran Church, Ferndale, and Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading. All of these churches have celebrated 250 year anniversaries of their ministry. If your church is celebrating a significant anniversary we invite you to submit your history to our organization for inclusion in the annual Church History Award Contest. Winners are announced and honored each October at our annual meeting.

We continue to publish "The Periodical" which is distributed to our members each year and available for purchase by non-members. Also available for purchase is our self-guided tour book entitled "Colonial Lutheran Churches and Historic Sites in Eastern Pennsylvania, 1638 – 1775".

We are currently working on preserving and cataloging the pictorial poster collection done by Mr. Leslie Ross containing pictures and information on our Lutheran churches. Upon completion of this project, the original posters and any information gathered will be housed at the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia in the lower level of the Brossman Center at the Seminary.

Officers:

Rev. Dr. Herbert H. Michel, President (NEPA)

Rev. George F. Spieker, Vice President (NEPA)

Phyllis Boyer, Recording Secretary (SEPA)

Rev. Virginia Biniek, Financial Secretary (NEPA)

Joshua A. Fink, Treasurer and Editor of Periodical (NEPA)

Submitted by

Phyllis D. Boyer, Recording Secretary

LUTHERAN HOME AT GERMANTOWN FOUNDATION SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPORT, 2014

Lutheran Home at Germantown Foundation receives, holds, and invests all endowment and similar funds of the corporation and raises, holds, and invests contributions for the support of social ministry organizations affiliated with the Church with particular reference to Silver Springs – Martin Luther School, recognizing the common heritage and historical ties between the corporation and Silver Springs – Martin Luther School.

The Foundation's continuing interest and investment in helping to meet the compelling needs of children who have faced steep challenges and pain, and so early in their lives, is the focus of its attention and the heart beat of its mission.

Kristen E.M. Gay, Ph.D., President/CEO

The Mission Investment Fund

The Mission Investment Fund (MIF), a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, makes low-interest **loans** to established ELCA congregations, new-start congregations and ELCA-related ministries for capital projects.

Established congregations use MIF loans to renovate, expand or relocate. New-start congregations rely on MIF loans to buy land and construct their first church buildings. ELCA-related ministries use MIF loans for a variety of capital projects.

To fund these loans, MIF offers a variety of **investments** for congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries to purchase. MIF investments offer adjustable- or fixed-rate terms and earn interest at competitive rates.

The Mission Investment Fund is **financially strong and stable**, with a record of steady, controlled growth:

- With total assets of \$660 million and net assets of \$190 million at year-end 2013, MIF achieved a capital ratio of 28.8 percent, maintaining MIF's position in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.
- At year-end 2013, loans for capital projects for more than 780 ELCA congregations and ministries totaled \$464 million. MIF investments by congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries totaled \$464 million.

Investments and Loans in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

As of December 31, 2013:

- 23 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of **\$18,918,999**, are at work throughout the synod.
- Investments in the Mission Investment Fund by 198 individuals, 79 congregations, 12 ministries and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod totaled **\$12,421,674**

MIF representative for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod:

The Rev. Mark Wimmer, *Regional Manager*: Tel. 267-203-1137; email: mark.wimmer@elca.org

Mission Investment Fund | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, Illinois 60631
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THE PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S WORK IN 2013

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches, rooted in an understanding of conciliar ecumenism in which its member church bodies "...seek to manifest their fellowship (koinonia) with one another, to engage in common ministries of witness and service, and to advance towards the goal of visible unity," sought through its programs and ministries to express those commitments.

FELLOWSHIP

In 2013 the Council worked to build and sustain fellowship among the leaders of its member church bodies by engaging in common worship and prayer at board meetings, encouraging the sharing of both the opportunities offered by and the concerns of member church bodies around Pennsylvania, and hosting a December overnight retreat for religious leaders at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College.

COMMON MINISTRIES OF WITNESS AND SERVICE

WITNESS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Through its Commission on Public Witness and its public advocacy ministry, the Council witnessed on behalf of social justice and for the common good. Information about these activities, as well as significant information on current concerns, can be found at www.pachurchesadvocacy.org.

MINISTRIES OF SERVICE

The Council supported local churches engaging in trucker and traveler ministry along a portion of I-80, where a chaplain served along with volunteers and local church leaders. The Council also supported local churches (in the Fruitbelt and in Chester County) engaged in ministry with migrant and seasonal farm workers. Field chaplains and volunteers offer farm workers and their families worship services, spiritual counseling, clothing and other material aid, assistance with immigration issues, emergency transportation for medical care, translation services, emergency housing and food, and recreation.

WITNESS AMONG PERSONS AT LEISURE

The Council also worked with local park ministry committees to assist in chaplain recruitment and program administration. The annual training held just after the Memorial Day holiday ensured that chaplains were equipped for their ministry. Over 10,000 campers in 35 state, federal, and private campgrounds across the state participated in worship services and other activities.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Commission on Unity and Relationships is planning a forum, scheduled for November 10, 2014 to explore how judicatories and congregations are implementing agreements of full communion among denominations. The Very Rev. Thomas Ferguson, dean of Bexley Hall Episcopal Seminary and former ecumenical and interreligious officer for The Episcopal Church, will be the keynote speaker.

CONCLUDING NOTE

In February, 2013 the Council's executive director announced his intention to retire effective March 1, 2014. The Board of Directors has named Jan Gulick, the Council's Director of Finance and Facilities, to serve as interim director until such time as the Board has completed its planning for the Council's future.

2014 ELCA Region 7 Report

The ELCA Constitution states: ‘This church shall have regions as a partnership between groups of synods and the churchwide organization for the purpose of exercising mutual responsibilities.’ (Chapter 18, section 01) There are nine regions of the ELCA, each served by a deployed churchwide staff member, called a coordinator. Region 7 consists of the synods of New Jersey, New England, Metro NY, Upstate NY, Northeastern PA, Southeastern PA and Slovak-Zion. It is my privilege to work with the bishops and the staff of those synods in a variety of ways, serving as a point of coordination between them, the churchwide offices in Chicago and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

While each of the nine coordinators across the church has a unique portfolio, depending on the needs and traditions of the particular region, all of us anchor our work in candidacy. We, supervised by the ELCA Director for Candidacy and Leadership, the Rev. Dr. Gregory Villalon oversee the work of candidacy to assure our whole church will have new rostered leaders who meet consistent high standards in their formation. Currently, our church body is reviewing and updating the formation guidelines (i.e. candidacy process) to meet new curricula being developed by the seminaries of the ELCA. These new guidelines are being shared with bishops, candidacy committees, candidates and seminaries for feedback, before they are finalized in 2015. The goal is to have a process that forms missional leaders for the church of today and tomorrow.

I continue to meet with synod candidacy committees to provide support and resources for their work with candidates, along with ongoing training. I meet with students at LTSP and work with the faculty and staff there to assist with the preparation of future leaders.

Our work on the first call theological education endeavor, called Leadership Guild continued this year. We are continuing with the theme of “adaptive leadership” and gaining greater fluency and depth along the way. It has been gratifying to hear that in several places around the region, people are sharing this information in workshops or meetings. Developing strong adaptive leadership skills will help as we move forward into the new things God has in store for the church and for God’s mission in the world.

We can be very excited and hopeful in Region 7 about our new leaders!

We held the annual gathering for Global Mission and World Hunger Leaders in the synods of our region in October. We also had a new event, gathering mission developers across the region for a retreat.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue in this work and for allowing me to share what is happening in our region.

Submitted by The Rev. Peggy Wuertele, Region 7 Coordinator