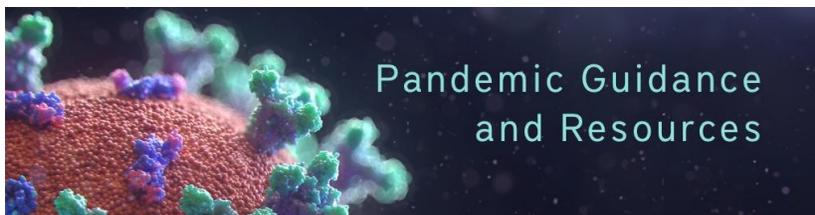


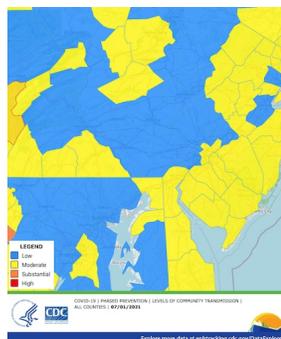


Resources for effective church leaders  
+ August 4, 2021

MinistryLink will not be published the weeks of August 9 and 16. The next issue will be the week of August 23.



As of August 2, the CDC reports that Philadelphia, Bucks, Delaware and Montgomery counties are experiencing “substantial” community transmission of coronavirus. The CDC recommends that all people, vaccinated or not, wear masks and maintain physical distancing in indoor public or multi-household gatherings.



[Learn more](#)

LATEST UPDATES ▲

CDC COVID TRACKER ▲

### LDR Responds to Bucks Flooding, Tornadoes

Lutheran Disaster Response-Eastern Pennsylvania is already mobilizing teams to help. Two weeks ago, hundreds of residents came by Keystone Elementary School in Croyden, PA seeking help. Thanks to local churches and organizations, over 300 clean out buckets were distributed. Last week, a tornado in Trevoese damaged a number of homes.



**Will you help those affected by the storms in July? Your gift today means that Lutheran Disaster Response can connect survivors to resources they need to recover. [Give now](#)**

If your congregation is interested in knowing how they can get involved by helping to feed volunteers, or volunteer to help with clean up and rebuild, contact Julia Menzo at [jmenzo@libertylutheran.org](mailto:jmenzo@libertylutheran.org).

Give Now

### ELCA Congregations Lead Initiative

The Congregations Lead Initiative is a new, two-year program that will gather a cohort of 50 congregations from across the ELCA to unleash and harness their collective genius and discover new and useful ministry innovations. Your congregation is invited to apply today to join the Congregations Lead Initiative. Learn more at [ELCA.org/CongregationsLead](https://ELCA.org/CongregationsLead).

### SEPA Churches In The News

*From the Souderton Independent:* “The E-Meal program that provides free meals at Emmanuel Lutheran Church and the Bread Drop program that provides peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and snack bags to food pantries and homeless people both started since the coronavirus pandemic hit.



“Garden of Health, another local program to feed those in need, started before the virus, but has changed since the pandemic.

“The three programs were highlighted July 30 in the first of a series of Acts of

Kindness A-OK Fridays — this one focusing on food insecurity — being held by a collaboration of five Souderton area churches.” [Learn more](#)

Send your congregation's story to [ministrylink@sepa.org](mailto:ministrylink@sepa.org)

## Presiding Bishop's Response to DACA Ruling

Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, has issued a pastoral message in response to a U.S. district judge ruling to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on July 19. “Jesus taught us that when we welcome the stranger as a person made in God’s image, we also welcome God,” the message read, in part.



“Our lives, ministries and congregations have been blessed by many immigrants and refugees over the years—from many of our ancestors to those we welcome among us today,” the message continued.

[Read the full message](#)

## How People of Faith Can Support COVID Orphans

Via RNS: CDC researcher Susan Hillis on how people of faith can support COVID orphans: “Faith communities are really good at doing this, walking with people through adversity until they get out the other side,” she said.

[Learn more](#)

## From the Anti-Racism Team

*Book Review: “The Color of Compromise, The Truth About the American Church’s Complicity in Racism.” by Jemar Tisby, Zondervan Reflective.*

I believe this book is a “must read” for anyone seeking the truth about racism in this country, and how the church has been and continues to be silent and/or complicit in the perpetuation of racism. Although the author admits that this is not an all-inclusive book on racism and the American church, it hits on many touch points as he leads us across the history from the beginning of the slave trade, thru the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, the Religious Right and the Black Lives Matter movement.

*From the back cover: “In The Color of Compromise, Jemar Tisby takes readers back to the roots of sustained racism and injustice in the American church. Filled with power stories and examples of American Christianity’s racial past, Tisby’s historical narrative highlights the obvious ways people of faith have actively worked against racial justice, as well as the complicit silence of racial moderates, identifying the cultural and institutional tables that must be flipped to bring about progress, Tisby provides an in-depth diagnosis for a racially divided American church and suggests way to foster a more equitable and include environment among God’s people.”*

Deacon Kathie Afflerbach  
SEPA Anti-Racism Team Member

## ICYMI

### Updates from Lutheran Advocacy PA

#### CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSPERSON IN AUGUST

U.S. representatives regularly return home districts to stay engaged with constituents. [August Recess](#) is one such time, when lawmakers often schedule town halls, meetings, and other opportunities to raise your experiences and policy concerns while they are local. [ELCA Advocacy's guide can help you connect faithfully.](#)



#### LET LAMPA HELP YOU PLAN FOR "GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS"

[New resources](#) are here for “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday, an ELCA churchwide dedicated day of service on Sept. 12. Find social media graphics, music for a special hymn, videos, posters, a toolkit, and considerations to serve safely during the pandemic. [Contact us](#) for ideas to take your service another step toward justice.



#### HELP CHILD TAX CREDITS REACH ALL FAMILIES IN NEED

Child Tax Credit payments can make an enormous dent in child poverty. Payments started going out to families in July as part of the American Rescue Plan. ELCA congregations can help ensure that all who



are eligible, including non-filers, receive this financial assistance. [Learn more here.](#)

## LIRS Offers Gather: Democratic Republic of Congo



LIRS is delighted to announce the second year of our newest program, **Gather: Democratic Republic of Congo**. This year, we invite you, your family, and your congregation or community to join LIRS in a unique refugee cultural experience that will help you engage with the story of the DRC through food, art, worship, music and more! Watch the Gather webinar, download the toolkits for resources, and host a Gather event to get your community involved in the work of refugee story-telling.

To kick off our program, we're hosting a webinar on August 3 at 4 p.m. EST to learn about the history and culture of the DRC. During this webinar, you will learn about the exciting Gather program and the resources available to help you get your community engaged with the story, people, and history of the DRC.

[Register Now](#)



## 2021-22 Forward Together in Faith Grant Applications

Our Synod is offering grants to congregations and leaders in 2021-22 for *new* initiatives and ministries that support the emphases of the Forward Together in Faith Campaign.

**More than \$130,000 has been awarded to congregations over the past three years.** These grants support *new* projects that help **network** congregations, leaders and community partners, **innovate** new forms of ministry and/or communities of faith, **communicate** through digital channels, and **equip** lay and rostered ministers.

**Applications must be received by Sept. 30, 2021**

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY →](#)

## Synod Seeks Assistant to the Bishop for Youth and Young Adult Discipleship

The Assistant to the Bishop for Youth and Young Adult Discipleship provides leadership and support to the youth and young adult initiatives of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The work of the Assistant to the Bishop will be shaped by the synod mission: *We equip our congregations and leaders for mission and service in the 21st Century, fostering passionate spirituality, vital congregations, adaptive leaders, effective storytelling, and faithful generosity.*

The successful candidate will build the beloved community with and among youth and young adult ministry in SEPA Synod. The Assistant will work collaboratively with the Bishop, synod staff, and partners to equip youth and young adults for leadership in the Church and community, equip adults who work with youth and young adults, and collaborate with congregations, social ministry organizations, ELCA, and ecumenical partners.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY →](#)

## The Future Church

### The Long Now

Elise Seyfried, director of spiritual formation at Christ's, Oreland, writes in Living Lutheran:

*He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." —Genesis 15:5*

I remember first reading the verse above, then going outside to look at the starry night sky. I imagined the Lord's conversation with Abram under that very same

sky, and God's promise that Abram's descendants would be too numerous to count.

In the thousands of years since, those descendants have indeed numbered in the billions, including me. But then I look ahead, to Abram's descendants still to come. I realize that I too am their ancestor, and that realization fills me with sadness. What am I leaving for my children's children? A planet awash in pollution and battered by climate change, nations raging against nations and within themselves? Even as a person of faith, I sometimes wonder if there's reason to be hopeful about the future.

But after learning about the [10,000 Year Clock](#) and speaking with a prominent Lutheran theologian, I anticipate the future with optimism.

[READ MORE](#)

## Learning Opportunities

### Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Open Conversations

Many people are concerned about the violence throughout the Holy Land this summer during the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We are providing two opportunities for you to zoom with Lutheran Palestinian Pastors who are current DMin students at ULS and a Palestinian Christian who recently became a naturalized US citizen:



- **Pastoring in Times of Crisis: Three Palestinian Pastors share their stories - Saturday, August 7th at 9:00am**
- **From Jerusalem to DC: A Palestinian Experience - Monday, August 9th at 7:00pm**

Participants will have a chance to ask questions and learn about the day to day life of those who've been affected by this ongoing conflict in the Middle East. You can register for one or both of these sessions by emailing the Rev. Dr. Martin Otto-Zimmann at [mzimmann@uls.edu](mailto:mzimmann@uls.edu). You will then be sent a zoom invitation.

### Parish Secretaries' Seminar Registration Open

The Planning Committee of the Parish Secretaries Seminar is excited to be hosting our annual gathering again of our parish secretaries and administrators after a year off due to the pandemic. It will be held October 5 and 6, 2021 at the Heritage Hotel, located in Lancaster, PA.

**This year's theme is "Re-engaging."** There will be two sessions on Tuesday: Pastor Tricia Neale will present "Re-engaging My Church" where we will discuss how to safely ease back into our lives as we settle into what this brave, new world looks like. Pastor Rebecca Knox will present: "Re-engaging My World", a session on coping with our fears over re-engaging and grief over everything we've lost, from plans, events and social groups to loved ones. Wednesday will feature devotions with Holy Communion. Following that, Kathi Basehore will present: "Re-engaging My Life", where we will discuss self-care techniques in this new normal.

**Final registration deadline is August 13.**

- [Download this registration packet to learn more.](#)

### Explore the Path of Grief

The loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult life events any one of us face and an experience each of us lives through in a uniquely individual way. Sylvia Havlish M.Ed., a bereavement counselor, will discuss the many different "faces" of grief at this presentation on Sunday, August 29, 2021 from 1 to 2:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 28 West Main Street, Macungie, PA 18062. Registration is not necessary but appreciated.



To register or for more information, please contact Julia Menzo by email at [jmenzo@libertylutheran.org](mailto:jmenzo@libertylutheran.org) or calling 267-464-7740. A program of Lutheran Congregational Services, an affiliate of Liberty Lutheran.

[Download a flyer](#)

### Mediation Skills Training Institute

Registration is now open for Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, to be held on October 11-15 and November 15-19, 2021. The two identical sessions will be held remotely via Zoom. This workshop is designed to help church leaders deal more effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of group conflict. For details consult this MSTI Brochure. For a

complete list of training events being offered by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center — including our one-day Conflict Transformation Skills and Healthy Congregations — please consult this LMPC 2021 Program Calendar. For online registration go to our website at [www.lmpeacecenter.org/all-events](http://www.lmpeacecenter.org/all-events). Plan now to take advantage of these outstanding opportunities for spiritual and professional growth!



## Enfleshing Witness

Thursday, August 26 | 11:00am-1:30pm Central

In a short-form, intentionally crafted gathering, you will encounter distinct voices, speaking from their own communities, enfleshing witness for this moment of challenge and creativity in the church and in the world. Between these witnesses, you will encounter liturgical experiments and collaborations to help digest the call of the divine.

[LEARN MORE](#)



We are a praying Synod, and we invite you to join us in prayer for the following people, organizations and needs lifted up by the people of SEPA.

Find this list on the web at [ministrylink.org/prayers](http://ministrylink.org/prayers)

## We pray...

### ...In gratitude and thanksgiving

- For all rostered ministers, church councils, and worship leaders guiding SEPA congregations through these exceptional times.
- For all of our Synod's candidates for rostered ministry, and for the members and work of the Candidacy Committee.
- For the recent ordinations of Rev. Ron Dzuik and Rev. Kathleen Kerin

### ...For those who mourn

- The Allen family on the death of Tony Allen (sister to Linda Curtis, Bishop Davenport's sister-in-law)
- The Gary family on the death of Mya Jackson
- The Blezard family on the death of Pastor Sharon Blezard.
- Pastor Kari Hart on the death of her mother
- For the family of Pr. David Krewson
- Pastor David Christensen on the death of his wife, Wendy
- The family of Pastor Luther Johnson
- Mrs. Kedra Flippin (wife of the Rev. Dr. William Flippin) on the death of her aunt Dorothy and uncle Clarence George

### ...For healing and comfort

- Pastor George Keck
- Pastor Carol Steinhart
- Pastor Bruce Ewing
- Jim Hollinger
- Pastor Beth Lockard
- Stephen Westra
- Pastor Arlene Greenwald
- Brother Earl Johnson
- Pastor John Carlson
- Pastor Susan Lynch
- Pastor Ed Oswald
- For all who serve as caregivers for the sick

### ...For the church

- For the congregational and synodical activities returning to in-person gatherings
- For all congregations in transition: Christ, North Philadelphia; Christ, Oreland; Christ, Trumbauersville; Emmanuel, Pottstown; Faith, Montgomeryville; Family of God, Buckingham; Good Shepherd, Southampton; Grace, Broomall; Grace, Mantua; Grace, Pottstown;

- Jerusalem, Almont; Living Word, Roslyn; Peace, Bensalem; Reformation, Mt Airy; Resurrection, Yardley; St. John, Morrisville; St. John, Phoenixville; St. John, Richlandtown; St. Luke, Ferndale; St. Luke, Obelisk; St. Matthew, Chester Springs; St. Matthew, Perkasio; St. Michael, Kensington; St. Michael, Unionville; St. Paul – Exton; St. Paul, Telford; St. Peter, Pottstown; St. Stephen, Feasterville; Trinity, Pleasant Valley; Trinity, Quakertown; Trinity, South Philadelphia; University, University City; Zion, Spring City;
- Tabernacle, Philadelphia
- Trinity, South Philadelphia
- St. Michael's, Kensington
- New Life, Philadelphia
- For the ministry of the Right Reverend Julius Harrison McAllister, Sr., and Mother Joan Marla McAllister (new Presiding Prelate and Episcopal Supervisor of the First Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church) and blessings for former Bishop Gregory G.M. Ingram and the Rev. Dr. Jessica Kendall Ingram.

**...For our community and world**

- For the individuals and communities experiencing COVID hot spots.
- For the billions living in poorer countries who do not have access to COVID vaccines.
- For those affected by extraordinary heat and wildfires in the Western US.
- For people who have lost loved ones or homes because of flooding in Germany and China.
- For the people and government of Haiti.
- For the divisions in our nation and the rise in White Nationalist activity in our region.
- For all who are suffering because of the increasing gun violence in Philadelphia and other cities — for those who have died, been wounded, or are grieving a lost loved one, as well as for all first responders.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers!**

Visit the Prayers webpage and submit prayer requests at [ministrylink.org/prayers/](http://ministrylink.org/prayers/)

Have stories, events, or resources to share?  
Send information for publication to [ministrylink@sepa.org](mailto:ministrylink@sepa.org)

[More MinistryLink News](#)

[COVID Information](#)

[Synod Calendar of Events](#)

[Job Listings](#)

The Synod staff and deans continue to work remotely until we can ensure that staff can return to the office safely.

[Staff Contacts](#)



**Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



**Thank you**

for taking the time to read this edition of MinistryLink. [Tell fellow church members and colleagues to subscribe by clicking here.](#)

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