

## Synod Assembly Report 2022

### Mission Statement:

Liberty Lutheran faithfully accompanies individuals and families who are facing life changing situations through an empowering approach that honors their choices and well-being. We continue to be grateful for the many ways the congregations and leadership of SEPA Synod are partners in this mission.

While much has changed in the last year, Liberty Lutheran continued to navigate the coronavirus pandemic by adapting and innovating in order to fulfill our mission and safely serve those who needed our care and services.

In our senior living communities we launched an aggressive campaign to vaccinate residents and staff. The number of residents vaccinated is near 100%, and staff vaccinations in the high 90's.

With protocols in place residents began enjoying meals together and participating in group activities. Life is looking a lot like it did prior to the pandemic. Our communities are vibrant places where older adults have options to live life to the fullest.

In recent months, our residents began feeling the pain of inflation. They are spending more of their life's savings on increased costs for medicine, healthcare, food and other basic goods.

Our benevolent care funds offer them peace of mind in knowing that they will be able to continue living in our communities, regardless of their ability to pay. Last fiscal year, Liberty provided \$1,329,346 in benevolent care, with an additional \$7,969,336 expended to cover unreimbursed Medicare and Medicaid costs.

LCFS West Philadelphia Senior Community Center reopened its doors in July of 2021, welcoming back members and bringing their favorite activities. Restrictions implemented by state and local institutions meant that the Center could not offer a sit down meal, so the Center continues to offer grab and go meals for those who need them serving over 150 people weekly.

Thanks to a grant from The W.W. Smith Charitable Trust, the center was able to provide:

- 200 Easter baskets containing food items,
- 200 Thanksgiving baskets with contents to make a holiday meal,
- Over 260 baskets for Christmas meals with either a turkey or ham,
- 1,360 gift cards to a local grocery store, and
- Cover emergency housing for ten people who needed help with rent, utilities, replacement of appliances or minor home repairs.

Meanwhile, Lutheran Congregational Services (LCS) continues to serve congregations and families through our bereavement program and Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training Program. Four SEPA congregations hosted trainings this past year, and 25 people from 6 different congregations attended.

LCS' Lutheran Disaster Response - Eastern Pennsylvania program continues to lead long term recovery efforts in the Eastwick neighborhood of Philadelphia. Through efforts with our partners we are very proud to have identified resources to restore heat and/or hot water to 25 families who were not able to restore this critical home mechanical equipment on their own. Volunteers are still needed for this effort as we are not working on rebuilding and repair for an additional 30 homes.

In September 2021, Hurricane Ida hit the east coast. Eight counties in Pennsylvania have received federal declarations for Individual Assistance, including all five counties in the SEPA Synod. Lutheran Disaster Response – Eastern PA is leading efforts to help families meet long term Ida needs, a process that will continue for probably two to three years. Many congregations stepped up to support survivors early on. It is exciting to see Lutheran congregations be such a strong safety network in their communities. The more support there is right after a disaster event the fewer long term needs exist. Thank you SEPA Synod and congregations for your efforts!

Finally, we continue to partner with the ELCA LDR offices to support international efforts in response to the war in Ukraine.



Partnerships with Lutheran congregations and the Southeastern Penn Synod of the ELCA are critical to our ability to fulfill our mission. Anyone wishing to partner with the Liberty Lutheran family of services can contact Julia Menzo, Director of Community Outreach, LCS, at [jmenzo@libertylutheran.org](mailto:jmenzo@libertylutheran.org), 267-464-7740.

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