

## SECTION G – REPORTS OF AGENCIES

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### BEAR CREEK CAMP



## BEAR CREEK CAMP

*Explore, celebrate & grow in God's creation!*

Greetings from Bear Creek Camp, the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry for the Southeastern and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA.

Thank you Southeastern PA Synod 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.

In the Summer of 2022, we were excited to continue residential camp ministry for youth and families with limited restrictions. The Bear Creek Camp experience focuses on the value of small group programming, empowering our young adult summer staff as facilitators and mentors, and intentionally welcoming and accepting all as we do the important work of building positive community within our borders and equipping our campers to do likewise when they return to their homes. This past summer, we were able to welcome 795 youth and family campers to camp with over 40% of those campers experiencing camp for the first time. We continue to serve our local community through our Nature Day Camp with 193 participants throughout the summer. 45 young adult leaders followed the call to serve as camp staff and experienced what it means to live in and create intentional Christian community.

Your financial and prayerful support of Bear Creek Camp as a synod and as individual congregations is vital to our success, especially as we continue to rebuild from the two years of reduced programs. Your investment is just that – an investment. Research shows that youth that attend a Christian camp, experience measurable change in their commitment to personal faith,

their desire to participate in faith practices in their home, and their sense that being a part of a faith community like a church is important to their life. These self-described changes aren't just being felt the week after a camper comes home from camp, but continue six months after a camp experience. We are building up young people and leaders to be active members of our synod's congregations to strengthen the church and the world. Thank you for joining us in this mission.

Throughout the year, we host groups and events including youth and confirmation retreats, men's and women's retreats, work groups, school field trips, disaster relief trainings, family reunions, and more. With over 2100 individuals attending events and retreats outside of our summer camp programs, the amount of lives that are positively impacted directly and indirectly through a Bear Creek Camp experience is overwhelming!

When I think of each of the people and families behind the numbers above, I think of the good that is happening in the world because of them. Bear Creek Camp is an amplifier—an opportunity to expand and grow upon the work of the congregation and the family in making a positive difference at a time when that is needed more than ever.

Please continue to pray for Bear Creek Camp as together we explore, celebrate, and grow in God's creation.

Respectfully submitted,

Collin Grooms - Executive Director

[www.bearcreekcamp.org](http://www.bearcreekcamp.org)

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**LAMPA  
(LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA)**

***LAMPa Report to Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly***

***In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, we advocate for wise and just public policies in Pennsylvania that promote the common good.*** Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is a shared ministry of seven Pennsylvania synods, ELCA Service and Justice, and Pennsylvania ELCA agencies and institutions. Through LAMPa, Lutherans called to be part of God's healing and reconciling mission in the world are supported to voice their faith convictions in the public square with and on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors and the world we share, while seeking to create a more just Commonwealth.

Since last year's assembly, LAMPa celebrated 43 years of advocacy ministry that supported and deepened your congregational efforts to address hunger, poverty, health care, civic engagement, housing and homelessness, and care for creation. Our decades of advocacy on these issues have enabled us to lift up the needs of your ministries and communities to secure emergency food, shelter and access to health care as the nation emerged from pandemic. In the midst of a nationwide housing crisis, your advocacy through LAMPa lifted the cap on funding for the state



housing trust fund, which Lutherans helped create more than a decade ago, and won passage of a Whole-Home Repairs law, a first-of-its kind program that will help maintain and improve its aging housing stock, increase energy efficiency, and help keep Pennsylvanians in their homes -- particularly important to preserving generational wealth for communities that have experienced racial discrimination in housing and lending. Your care for creation was turned into bipartisan support for investments in environmental conservation and protection for waterways (and the drinking water we draw from them) at a time when one third of the state's streams have been deemed impaired.

In its work of equipping disciples, growing leaders and supporting vital congregations, LAMPa assisted with the Homeless Remembrance Blanket Project on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, soliciting and delivering invitations from ELCA-affiliated ministries around the country (including this synod) to members of Congress to visit and learn from their work with neighbors experiencing homelessness. LAMPa continues to educate faithful advocates through our website, e-news and other resources, as well as teaching. LAMPa supports congregations in adding advocacy to their service on God's work. Our hands, Sunday, and would welcome the opportunity to help SEPA Synod ministries take their service another step toward justice by adding advocacy. LAMPa staff continues to serve in consultation to the ELCA task force developing the social statement on Faith and Civic Life, and urges all to devote time to the newly released study and to offer feedback.



To receive action alerts that allow you to act from your faith on developing policy, or to learn how LAMPa can help your congregation deepen its ministry of service and accompaniment with public witness, send a note to [LAMPa@LutheranAdvocacyPA.org](mailto:LAMPa@LutheranAdvocacyPA.org).

We give thanks to God for you and for the support of our Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Policy Council representatives, Donna Skinner Echols and Bruce McCullough.

With deep gratitude for all the ways in which you support LAMPa's ministry,

Tracey DePasquale  
LAMPa Director

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**LUTHERAN ARCHIVES CENTER AT PHILADELPHIA**

**See Section G, Addendum 1 & 2**

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**MISSION INVESTMENT FUND & ELCA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

**Section G, Addendum 3 & 4**

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**PORTICO**

**See Section G, Addendum 5**

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**THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA  
& ZONES OF PEACE INITIATIVE**



Report to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

March 2023

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia gathers senior leaders from 35 faith traditions to foster relationships of mutual support and solidarity with one another and to address major issues facing the region. Bishop Davenport is an active and respected leader among her peers. Each senior leader appoints someone from their tradition to serve on its Administrative Group to assist the Council in its work. Rev. Fritz Fowler serves with distinction as the Lutheran member of the Administrative Group.

During the past year the Council has aligned itself with civic efforts to address gun violence, learning about and, sometimes, collaborating with organizations such as *Black Clergy of Philadelphia*, *Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia*, *the Restorative Cities initiative*, *CeaseFirePA*, and *the District Attorney's 57 Blocks Initiative*. In June of 2022 the RLC and *Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence* gathered hundreds of their constituents for ***From Sanctuary to Street, From Lament to Action***. A memorial to the lost was erected at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Center City. An inspiring multi-faith worship service in the Cathedral was followed by a march to City Hall where speakers called for actions to curb gun violence. On the way, the march paused at the site of a homicide to pray, consecrating the site as a place of peace.

The Council has devoted time and resources to peace-making since it began in 2006. It's *Zones of Peace* initiative gives recognition and encouragement to houses of worship and community organizations that are exemplary, creative, and effective in addressing the root causes of violence. 95 houses of worship and organizations have been nominated, vetted, and recognized. Several of the Synod's congregations (most recently St. John's, Mayfair) have been honored as Zones of Peace, as well as the Lutheran Settlement House and The Village (one of the predecessor organizations combined to create GEMMA Services.) Thanks to a grant from the Lutheran Deaconess Community, *Zones of Peace* added staff devoted to facilitating collaboration among organizations and houses of worship to reduce violence in specific neighborhoods. If your congregation is interested, contact John Hougen at [jbh@interfaithphiladelphia.org](mailto:jbh@interfaithphiladelphia.org)

For more information go to <https://www.interfaithphiladelphia.org/council>

The Rev. Edward Livingston, Coordinator, The Religious Leaders Council  
The Rev. John B. Hougen, Coordinator, Zones of Peace

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## THRIVENT

# thrivent

Helping churches, members and communities in Southeastern Pennsylvania **Thrive with Purpose!** We thrive when we make the most of all God has given us. Thrivent is committed to helping those we serve – individuals, churches, nonprofits, small businesses – make informed financial decisions based on Christian values. We believe money is a tool, not a goal. We're honored to offer churches unique resources to help you manage ongoing operations as you carry out your mission and strengthen our communities.

We're excited to report:

- Thrivent directed **\$264,570** in **Choice Dollars** to more than 450 churches and nonprofits in the five-county Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod district in 2022.
- **Thrivent Action Teams** continue to support church missions and outreach by engaging congregation members in service, educational and fundraising volunteer projects. In 2022, **6,100** Thrivent Action Teams were lead in our Mid-Atlantic Region raising nearly \$6.9 million. Thrivent contributed **\$1.5 million in project expense funding**. *More than 70% of our Thrivent Action Teams are associated with a church partner!*
- A new offering, **Money Canvas**, provides *free* online coaching to help individuals build healthier budgeting, saving, and spending habits. There is no judgment, no sales, and no requirement to be a Thrivent client. Sessions are available in both English and Spanish. Learn more here: [Money Canvas](#)
- Churches in the SEPA Synod district were invited to join us in our **Faith Builds** partnership with **Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery and Delaware Counties**. The Faith Builds home in Hatfield, PA will be dedicated this March 2023! Thank you to all who supported this effort through prayers & fundraising!
- **Financial education workshops and webinars** help strengthen congregations through *values-based* teaching on topics ranging from budgeting and goal setting to more advanced topics such as college saving, retirement planning, legacy and *charitable giving strategies*. Workshops and webinars are available at *no cost* to congregations.
- Our **Thrivent Member Network Mid-Atlantic** provides additional opportunities for fellowship, inspiration, education, and generosity. Highlights include monthly lunchtime webinars for church leaders, as well as faith testimonies from athletes such as Tim Tebow and Ryan Shazier, as well as inspirational concerts from Christian recording artists such as Amy Grant, Matthew West & Mandisa. Visit: [Thrivent.com/Mid-Atlantic](https://www.thrivent.com/Mid-Atlantic) for a listing of upcoming events. No products are sold at these events.
- Thrivent has been named one of the **World's Most Ethical Companies** by Ethisphere for **12** years in a row! We're proud of our 100+-year history of strength and stability, and we're committed to continuing to provide practical **financial guidance**, investments, insurance, banking, church financing, endowments, and charitable giving solutions.

For more information, visit: <https://www.thrivent.com/> or contact:

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**See Thrivent Resources & Canvas in Section G, Addendum 6 & 7**