



“Give thanks for those whose hope is clear, beyond mere mortal sight: who seek the city God has planned, the true, eternal promised land, and steer on toward that light, a beacon ever bright..”
– Give Thanks for Saints (ELW 428)

Dear Faithful Saints of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod,

Thank you, saints, for witnessing to God’s extravagant love and grace in this five-county region around Philadelphia. Through our annual All Saints appeal, we give thanks for our ministry together, we celebrate what the Holy Spirit is doing in our synod, and we invite your financial support and your prayers for what’s next. The highlight of 2024 is how we are utilizing alternate pathways in addition to the traditional candidacy process, raising up new leaders that can address the changing leadership needs of our congregations.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod equips the saints for the work of ministry.

Vicar Sarajeon Grainson joined the people of Community of Love Lutheran Church in Oxford after they waited nearly six years for new pastoral leadership. They had started to give up hope that the synod would ever find them a new pastor before Vicar Grainson came to serve through the ELCA’s **Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM)** program. Vicar Grainson serves the people of Community of Love as their pastoral presence while also fulfilling seminary and candidacy requirements. Emerging ministries can take the form of multicultural ministries, new mission starts, and ministries with people who are differently abled. But in Oxford, we had a former mission start that needed to return to its missional roots as the congregation healed from past trauma. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has supported Vicar Grainson with candidacy scholarships, mentors, and mission development training. Community of Love has also been the recipient of support from the Fund for Mission and Forward Together in Faith, making it possible for the congregation to pay Vicar Grainson and amplify their community outreach through annual coat drives, fire recovery, and their “Share the Love Family Boutique” allowing families in need to shop for free clothes.



Minister Bobbie Hoffman never imagined that God would be calling her to pastoral ministry. For decades, she had been a faithful layperson asking her pastors to let her know how she could help. Each one found plenty for her to do, giving Minister Hoffman opportunities to pray with others, teach Bible studies, and even do funerals while they were out of town. Then, about a year ago, her pastor and the dean of Upper Montgomery conference said that St. Luke Lutheran Church in Gilbertsville needed help. Having been without a pastor for 2.5 years, St. Luke needed someone to preach while the call committee waited for names of possible pastoral candidates. After doing this a while, Minister Hoffman wished out loud that she had the right credentials to serve as their pastor. She was feeling called to long-term ministry with this congregation, and the congregation wanted her too. They were grateful to learn that the **Synod Authorized Ministry** program could credential lay people to serve as a congregation’s pastoral presence. They are being the presence of Christ for their neighbors through St. Luke Knolls senior housing, the Community Clothing Rack, and an astounding commitment to pastoral care for all.

In April 2023, the people of Reformation Lutheran Church in Mt. Airy invited the Rev. Dr. Anthony L. D. Scott to serve as their next pastor. Pastor Scott is ordained and rostered through the United Church of Christ, serving through the ELCA's **full communion partnerships** at Reformation. Their call committee had interviewed candidates for nearly three years but not found a Holy Spirit match with their next pastor. Then Pastor Scott was introduced to the congregation by a mutual friend, and the synod worked to get paperwork in order with both the ELCA and the UCC for his leadership to be official. Pastor Scott is helping the people of Reformation-Mt. Airy continue their legacy as "The Welcome Place," drawing more people into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ; feeding people spiritually through Bible study, prayer, and worship; and feeding people physically through Rise Against Hunger meal packing and collections for food ministries including the food pantry for students of United Lutheran Seminary.



We invite you to invest in expanding new ways to raise up leaders for SEPA congregations.

New leadership pathways are needed now more than ever. We give thanks for saints like Vicar Sarajeon Grainson, Minister Bobbie Hoffman, and Pastor Anthony Scott who have said yes to God's call. We give thanks for the congregations that have opened themselves up to new pathways of leadership. We give thanks for you dear saints of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod because this is work that we can only do together and with your financial support.

Gifts to the All Saints Appeal stay 100% local and are used to directly fund the ministries of our synod. Congregational mission support does not fully fund the synod budget. We rely on a network of saints investing in this important kingdom-building work. We invite you to give today in honor of the saints in your life who have shared their faith with you. Give in anticipation of the new people God will use to proclaim the gospel in our congregations and communities. We're pledging our own gifts to support our synod's mission as we give thanks for each of you – for your witness, for your financial support, and for your ongoing prayers for this work we do together. Every dollar you give translates into direct mission in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. It takes all of the saints to make this possible.

Visit our website (<https://ministrylink.org/donate>) or use the enclosed pledge form to make your gift to the All Saints Appeal today.

Thank you for being SEPA Saints! God bless you!

Handwritten signature of Bryan J. Penman in black ink.

The Rev. Bryan J. Penman,
Bishop

Handwritten signature of Karen M. Sease in black ink.

The Rev. Karen M. Sease,
Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations
& Leadership / Mission Advancement