

A Greeting and Thank You from Bishop Michael

To the Saints of the Allegheny Synod,

May God's grace and the love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Thank you for your partnership in our ministry together as the Allegheny Synod. It is a blessing of God and truly amazing the way in which you reach out to the world, responding to needs both in our community and in our world and sharing the love of Jesus Christ with our neighbors. All that we do and can do happens because Jesus Christ is alive is here with us in the heart of Pennsylvania.

The success our Allegheny Synod Can Challenge has had over the past three years testifies to the ways in which the Holy Spirit is working through you to care for your neighbor. The Allegheny Synod leads the nation in contributions to the Lutheran World Relief Blanket Sunday offerings each year. You continually respond to calls from Lutheran Disaster Response after earthquakes in Haiti and Mexico, flooding in West Virginia and South Carolina, and most recently in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. You feed and clothe your communities by supporting your local food and clothing pantries, and some of you are the food and clothing pantries for your communities. Where there is a need, you respond and you help. Thank you for listening to God's call to care for people who are vulnerable and hurting. We thank God that we are invited to be part of our Lord's healing work in this world.

I thank God for our leaders. We are blessed in our Synod with deacons and pastors who are among the best in the ELCA. Our leaders love Jesus Christ and they love you. God has gifted us richly with quality rostered ministers and the gifts they bring to care for God's people here in the heart of Pennsylvania. We are truly blessed. To our deacons and pastors, thank you for your service to Christ and the gospel.

We also are blessed by God to have a dedicated team of lay worship leaders in our Synod. These are the people who participate in the Ignite Program (formerly DYD program) to be trained in the basics of leading worship and the life of the church. They undergo what can be a two-year program of study to be able to lead worship in those congregations that don't currently have, or possibly are not able to call, a pastor. Our lay worship leaders are a blessing to us. If you know anyone who is in or has been in this program, please thank them for their service to our church and our Synod.

We thank God for the way the Holy Spirit is raising up people to consider seminary and life in ministry. As of this writing, we have 16 people

from the Allegheny Synod in our candidacy process. In 2014 we had two people in the process. God has blessed us. That has happened because you, the Allegheny Synod, have prayed for, encouraged, and supported these people in your congregations as they have started this journey. Please continue to pray that God will raise up leaders for our church.

Finally, I want to thank the staff of your Synod Office. Our staff works very hard to work with you and support you in your ministry. They are selfless in their love of our Synod and their love for you. Thank you Michelle, Marty Jo, Pastor Paula, and Pastor Tim for your service.

It is a blessing to serve in the Allegheny Synod. As we begin this fourth year together, please know that you are always in my prayers. I pray that God will continue to bless and lead our Synod. Christ is with us. Christ is alive here in the heart of Pennsylvania. May we continue to be led and opened to where our Lord Jesus is leading us.

In Christ,
Bp Michael Rhyne

Reformation Anniversary

Please remember that we have a number of Synod events coming up as we mark the 500th Anniversary of start of the Reformation. We hope you can join us as we praise our Lord and celebrate what the Spirit continues to do in this world.

Saturday, October 14 Reformation Festival
American Legion Park, Hollidaysburg
Festival starts at 2pm, Outdoor Worship Service starts at 6:30pm

Sunday, October 29 500th Anniversary Service
First Lutheran, Altoona
Prelude will begin at 2:50pm, Worship Service begins at 3pm

Tuesday, October 31 Reformation Day Prayer Services
Service of prayer on Reformation Day sponsored by churches across our Synod

Wednesday, November 1 All Saints Service: "First Day of the next 500"
Zion Lutheran, Johnstown
Service begins at 7pm