

# The LUTHERAN Letter

TO INFORM, INSPIRE AND ILLUMINATE

# Digital

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## Early Summer



## Edition



*Submitted photo*

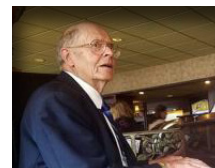
**Some of the volunteers who were at work in the Duncansville kitchen.**

## PIEROGI POWER

**Congregation finds unique way to help Ukraine**  
**MORE ON PAGE 6**

## Johnstown's Piano Man

*Noon Recitals  
Commence at  
First Lutheran*



**John Pencola**

**BY THE LUTHERAN LETTER**

Johnstown's piano man, John Pencola, was set to open the April series of Tuesday noon recitals at First Lutheran Church in Downtown Johnstown.

The recitals, featuring talented local musicians and musical groups, has become a tradition at the church.

His was the first of four recitals in April, which were followed by box lunches.

**(See RECITALS Page 8)**



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

# The LUTHERAN Letter

TO INFORM, INSPIRE AND ILLUMINATE  
is published bi-monthly by the  
**ALLEGHENY SYNOD OF THE ELCA**

Bishop Paula Schmitt

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Note: The Office of the Bishop reserves the right to revise, cancel or reject any advertisement or editorial information.

## SUBMISSIONS

Please contact the editorial team (above) with your comments and story ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

## OUR MISSION

Called by God to be one in Christ: we worship, grow in faith and serve all people.

## OUR VISION

Because Christ is here... We are actively engaging in God's work and sharing the Gospel as the Holy Spirit increases the followers of Jesus Christ.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Articles for the Letter should be about 300 words or less and include applicable website or contact information.

Images should be as high resolution as possible, ideally 300 ppi at 3x5 inches (900x1500 pixels.)

Send files to [LutheranLetter@AlleghenySynod.com](mailto:LutheranLetter@AlleghenySynod.com).

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Allegheny Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# Next on Our List

## *A Message from Bishop Paula Schmitt*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I am a list-maker. I find making a list helps me stay on top of things — and sometimes the list gets buried and I am not on top of things! Seeing a long list of things to accomplish can feel overwhelming to some. For me, it means we are doing something; it means we are looking forward with anticipation and hope for things to come.

One of the things on my list is to initiate an Advocacy Team in our synod. There are people all over our synod who are passionate about different issues, including food insecurity, poverty, racism, gender justice, the preservation of creation and more. If you are someone who has energy and passion for an issue like this, or another one, please be in contact with me so I can add your name to the team. I would like to gather this team in late summer to begin the important work of advocating and raising awareness. Another thing on my list is to rebuild the Ignite Committee. Our authorized lay worship leaders help ensure that almost all of our congregations can participate in worship each week. I have been in conversation with the bishops of the Upper Susquehanna and Northwestern PA Synods to discuss how we can build a partnership for some of the educational pieces of this ministry. We are looking for participants. If you or someone you know has gifts for worship leadership, contact the Office of the Bishop for more information. We also are looking for people to serve on the committee who will oversee the education and authorization process.



**Bishop Paula Schmitt**

**(See BISHOP 1, Page 15)**

# Church Rocks Sock Project

BY THE LUTHERAN LETTER

In January the Care and Connect Team at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Altoona challenged the congregation to bring in 150 pairs of socks to be donated

for community projects.

The congregation doubled that challenge, providing more than 420 pairs of socks, which will be distributed to Domestic Abuse Project, Family Services Inc., and Catholic Charities. †

## Lutheran Letter Patrons

Thanks to these individuals and groups for their generous donations, which helped to make this issue of The Lutheran Letter possible.

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*Submitted photo*

**Pastor Barry Folmar with some of the socks that were collected.**

## Lutheran Letter Patron Form

If you would like to support the *Lutheran Letter* as a patron or make a donation, please complete this form and return it to:

The Allegheny Synod, c/o Lutheran Letter,  
701 Quail Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

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By \_\_\_\_\_

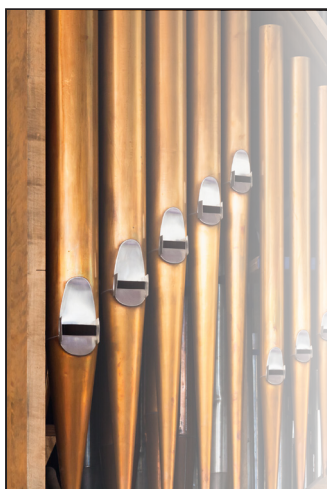
In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to make a Donation to the *Lutheran Letter*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ amount

## ORGANIST POSITION

First Lutheran/Johnstown. Pay per service. Play 3,000-pipe organ and accompany choir. Call Sheri at 814-536-7521 or email [firstlutheran@wpia.net](mailto:firstlutheran@wpia.net)







*Submitted photo*

**Some of the cupcakes that were part of the event.**

# 500 Cupcakes Featured

## *Thrivent Grant Powers Fundraiser in Friedens*

**BY JULIE BARICHIVICH**

*Friedens Lutheran Church Youth Leader*

Friedens Lutheran Church used a \$250 Thrivent Action Team Grant on a sweet project.

The church purchased supplies for a Cupcake Wars event, featuring four teams.

Team Cupcakes of Love was our pre-school through fourth-grade team, Chocolate Thunder was our middle/high school

team, Team FLC was our pastor/adult team and Topped with a Swirl was another adult family team. We had 37 people involved. All teams met the Sunday before the event for a 45-minute cupcake and display planning session. On the day of the event, all teams got together at the church and baked and built their cupcake displays. More than 500 cupcakes were made.

**(See SWEET, Page 5)**



# Remember in Prayer

Join the Allegheny Synod in prayer for these congregations this issue.

## MAY

**Week 1:** Cedar Grove Lutheran, Cedar Grove

**Week 2:** Spring Mills Parish: New Hope Lutheran, Spring Mills; and St. John Union, Farmers Mills

**Week 3:** Trinity Lutheran, Sidman

**Week 4:** St. Luke Lutheran, Mt. Union

## JUNE

**Week 1:** St. Paul Lutheran, Johnstown

**Week 2:** St. Mark Lutheran, Pleasant Gap

**Week 3:** Trinity Lutheran, Johnstown

**Week 4:** Mountain Saints Parish: St. John, Addison; St. Paul, Fort Hill; Mt. Carmel, Meyersdale; and Mt. Tabor, Garrett



Submitted photos

Some of the cupcake warriors. At right are the Thrivent shirts that were tie-dyed and sold.



# SWEET

(Continued from Page 4)

The displays and cupcakes had to be completed in a three-hour timeframe, with each team baking at least two different types of cupcakes and making at least six dozen per team.

Their displays had to hold all of their cupcakes and reach at least a foot high.

On Sunday, between services, the congregation members were invited to vote on the appearance and displays, as well as to purchase the cupcakes.

We also had a judging table where six random parishioners were chosen to taste test all 12 flavors of cupcakes that were made.

We sold out of all of the cupcakes in less than a hour. We were able to raise \$1,334 for our youth!

We also took last year's leftover Thrivent shirts and reverse tie-dyed (bleached) them and had them available for a donation — and that was included in the total money raised. †

# From the Kitchen

## *Congregation Puts Talents to Good use with Ethnic Food Fundraiser*

BY THE LUTHERAN LETTER

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Duncansville found a way to help Ukraine from the kitchen.

Talented congregation members made and sold pierogies for delivery and pickup during Holy Week.

Pastor Jaime Olson reported that 100% of proceeds will be sent to Lutheran

World Relief for the Ukrainian people.

"I was taught how to make pierogi 50 years ago when I worked for a Polish caterer as a kid," Olson said in an email about the project.

"We recently had a pierogi-making class at the church and decided to make and sell as an appropriate food from Eastern European countries." †



*Submitted photos*

**More scenes from the kitchen, as congregation members make pierogies.**

**thrivent**



**Andrea K. Paul**

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# AN ABIDING PRESENCE

## *Music & Lutheran Faith*

**This feature is part of an ongoing series examining the people and images portrayed on stained-glass windows in the Church of the Abiding Presence in Gettysburg.**

*(Editor's note: This information was taken from a Q&A feature about music on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Website. It has been edited for length.)*

Asking “What is the role of music in the liturgy?” can obscure something about worship one may have never considered: the liturgy itself is musical. The words and actions of the liturgy, even if no songs are sung, are, in a sense, musical.

The pattern of gathering, word, meal and sending has within it highs and lows, silence and speech, movement and stillness.

More commonly, however, when we ask “what is the role of music in the liturgy” we are referring to music’s function; we are addressing how music works in the liturgy.

Music, especially singing, has been inextricably linked to our story as God’s people. All God’s people have sung throughout recorded history. The Israelites sang after their deliverance from Egypt. David sang in time of trouble and rejoicing. Mary and Simeon sang songs of thanksgiving. John, on the island of Patmos, heard the glorious songs of the angels in his vision.

**(See MUSIC, Page 11)**

# Diaper Bank Serves Cambria and Somerset Counties

BY RICK KAZMER

*The Lutheran Letter Editor*

Volunteers have been busy early this year packing 22,000 Pampers, Huggies and other brands of diapers into parcels of 25.

It's the result of a diaper drive started by the United Way of the Laurel Highlands last summer to build a stockpile that will supply diapers to dispersal points strategically located in Cambria and Somerset Counties utilizing the United Way's network of collaborating partners.

Hundreds of individuals and numerous businesses and organizations contributed to the collection.

Teams of volunteers have been spending hours at the United Way's Johnstown office to repackage and label the diapers. About one out of three families struggle to afford diapers, according to the National Diaper Bank Network.

This service will help to fill the void many families face each month. The banks, intended as a supplemental service, will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. the last Tuesday of the month.

Call the United Way at 814-535-2563, or email [admin@uwlaurel.org](mailto:admin@uwlaurel.org) for information.

*(Editor's note: Rick Kazmer works for United Way of the Laurel Highlands.) †*

**DISTRIBUTION POINTS ARE ON THE NEXT PAGE**

## RECITALS

*(Continued from Page 1)*

The activities are supported by contributions to the church music fund and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. There is no admission charge. Pencola, considered "the keeper of the American songbook," was honored in September by many of the area's top musicians at a program presented by the Johnstown Concert Series. "Music is my hobby and my life," Pencola, who grew up in East Conemaugh, said. His music career began 76 years ago when his parents gave him a harmonica. He began to play in area bands at the age of 13.

He studied at the Johnstown College of Music and Concord College in Athens, West Virginia. He holds a master's in music education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. For 21 years he was a music teacher and band director at Conemaugh Valley High School.

Early on he played in Slovak halls and VFW's with the Jimmy Cannin band. He's also played in clubs and restaurants throughout the region. He was a founding member of, and still plays in, one of the city's top bands, Jazz in Your Face, along with its leader, Mike Bodolosky. †





**United Way**  
of the Laurel Highlands  
*Serving Cambria & Somerset Counties*

# OPERATION Diaper *Delivery*

Distribution points are located by school district in each county

## CAMBRIA COUNTY DIAPER BANK LOCATIONS

**ALL BANKS ARE OPEN 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
*the last Tuesday of each month for supplemental pickup.*

Blacklick Valley SD  
Cambria County Child  
Development Corp.  
300 Prave Street, Suite 101  
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Cambria Heights SD  
Small Town Hope  
2214 Bigler Ave.  
N. Cambria, PA 15714

Central Cambria SD  
Cambria County Child  
Development Corp.  
300 Prave Street, Suite 101  
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Conemaugh Valley SD  
Beginnings  
111 Market St.  
Johnstown, PA 15901

Ferndale SD  
Goodwill Southern Alleghenies  
Moxham Food Pantry Location  
540 Central Ave.  
Johnstown PA 15902

Forest Hills SD  
The Learning Lamp  
2025 Bedford Street  
Johnstown, PA 15904

Glendale SD  
Small Town Hope  
2214 Bigler Ave.  
N. Cambria, PA 15714

Greater Johnstown SD  
15901 / 15905 / 15906  
Beginnings, Inc.  
111 Market St.,  
Johnstown PA 15901  
**15902 / 15904 / 15905**  
Goodwill Southern  
Alleghenies, Moxham  
Food Pantry Location  
540 Central Ave.,  
Johnstown PA 15902

Northern Cambria SD  
Small Town Hope  
2214 Bigler Ave.  
N. Cambria, PA 15714

Penn Cambria SD  
Cambria County Child  
Development Corp.  
300 Prave Street, Suite 101  
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Portage SD  
The Learning Lamp  
2025 Bedford Street  
Johnstown, PA 15904

Richland SD  
The Learning Lamp  
2025 Bedford Street  
Johnstown, PA 15904

## SOMERSET COUNTY DIAPER BANK LOCATIONS

**ALL BANKS ARE OPEN 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
*the last Tuesday of each month.*

Westmont SD  
Goodwill Southern Alleghenies  
Moxham Food Pantry Location  
540 Central Ave.  
Johnstown PA 15902

Berlin, Confluence,  
Meyersdale, Salisbury  
& Turkeyfoot SD  
Family Center  
Salisbury Office  
192 Smith Street  
Salisbury, PA 15558

Conemaugh Township,  
North Star & Somerset SD  
Tableland  
535 E. Main St., Ste. 1  
Somerset, PA 15501

Shade Central City,  
Shanksville & Windber SD  
Family Center  
Central City Office  
314 Central Ave.  
Central City, PA 15926

**EMERGENCY BANKS:** Salvation Army Somerset Service Center is the Emergency Diaper Bank for Somerset County: 334 W. Main St., Somerset, PA 15501 - Open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mon. to Fri.; YWCA is the Emergency Diaper Bank for Cambria County: 526 Somerset St., Johnstown, PA 15901 - Open 9a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon. to Fri.



Photos by Courtney Kazmer

The flowers were cut out using a Pinterest picture as a guide.



I painted them using inexpensive craft paint from Walmart.



Now cat-safe colors can brighten our home while the real ones grow outside.

## *Cats Chewing Your Flowers? Make Wooden Ones Instead*

By COURTNEY KAZMER  
Home & Garden Editor

I love to be surrounded by flowers — outside of the house and inside of it.

But because of our cats, who eat everything, I am not able to have flowers inside. So, I decided to make wooden flowers, that Yoda and Lilly won't be so inclined to chew on.

For this project, we used some extra wood we had from other crafts, and some inexpensive craft paint. I am not very good at using the jigsaw and scroll saw, so I put Rick to work cutting out the flowers.

I gave him a picture that I found on Pinter-

est to use as a guide — and away he went to cutting them out. For those of you who don't know what Pinterest is, it is an online app that you can download on your phone, or use the website, where many craft ideas can be found.

It is my No. 1 place to go when I need an idea. Nothing will ever replace seeing and smelling real flowers.

But this was a fun project that brought flowerful colors into our house.

It's finally May and the flowers are awake outside — I had better go tend the garden.

Happy flower season! †



# 'The Mountains and Hills Shall Break Into Singing'

*(Editor's note: This feature is a continuation of the reflection on the musical-themed stained-glass window at the Church of the Abiding Presence in Gettysburg on Page 7.)*

**BY PASTOR NANCY L. HOOVER**

*Grace Lutheran Church, Johnstown*

This window at the Church of the Abiding Presence in Gettysburg quotes from Isaiah 55: 12, "Go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and hills shall break into singing!"

Lutherans know the importance of music, both vocal and instrumental, in our worship services and in our personal lives as well.

Often the first song a young child learns is "Jesus Loves Me," and beloved songs of Easter and Christmas remain in our hearts and on our lips throughout our lives, just as melodies of favorite hymns from centuries ago — and up to today — echo through our minds at special times of need.

**(See SINGING 1, Page 15)**

## MUSIC

*(Continued from Page 7)*

The psalms, the Bible's hymnbook, testify to the link of story to song: "Your love, O Lord, forever will I sing; from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness." (Psalm 89:1).

While Scripture and Christian history attest to the gifts of instruments and dancing, the human voice has been given central place in the Church's music.

"Principles for Worship", an ELCA document on worship, guides the church in its use of music in the assembly.

Of the human voice, it states: "In the church, the primary musical instrument is the human voice, given by God to sing and proclaim the word of God" (Principle M-2).

Consideration for the role of music in worship takes as its starting point the singing of the whole congregation.

The question about music's role can portray music exclusively as a kind of tool, suggesting that music exists only for the sake of something else. That is why the first role "Worship Formation & Liturgical Resources: Frequently Asked Questions" of music is not really a "role" at all.

Luther regarded music first and foremost as gift, one of the principles of music listed in "Principles for Worship": "God creates music as part of the whole creation and gives it to humankind to develop and shape" (Principle M-1).

We receive music as a gift of God.†

# SINGING 1

*(Continued from Page 11)*

I am a life-long Lutheran, and although I am an ordained pastor now, serving at Grace Lutheran in Johnstown, I began church work at the age of 8 when our congregation was getting a new piano, and our Church council offered it to my family in case I was interested in learning to play. By the age of 10, I became the pianist to accompany hymns for the children's Sunday School, went on to play the organ for church services and at the age of 15 was named the full-time organist. So music has been an important and rewarding part of my faith journey for nearly my entire life.

Of course, there are many functions of music within our worship times, from the actual singing and instrumental accompanying of the liturgy to the selection of appropriate preludes, hymns, choral music and other occasional music.

Musicians work to make selections that reflect the seasons and lessons of the day so that there is a cohesive theme that prevails throughout the service. Most important, of course, is that the entire liturgy give glory to God and inspiration to God's people, along with a feeling of unity that we are all experiencing and participating together in this "work of the people."

As the stained-glass window in Gettysburg suggests, music is just one of the



*Photo from Grace Lutheran's website*  
**Pastor Nancy Hoover playing the piano.**

arts used to capture the spirit of worship, both public and private. The beauty of the written word, as suggested by the Isaiah quote, and the words from "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" in the lower panel, as well as the depiction of the architecture of the church building, with its steeple pointing skyward, and even the artistry of the glasswork itself all suggest that humanity's various artistic talents, gifted to us by God, can be used to honor God and share our faith. Even liturgical dance is being incorporated into worship.

Interestingly, church musicians are sometimes difficult to find, as young people do not seem to be as attracted to learning to play an instrument as they were in times past, and some churches have had to use prerecorded music or sing a cappella.

**(See SINGING 2, Page 13)**





# SAVE THE DATES

## **Intergenerational Day at Camp Sequanota**

Saturday, May 14, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

"God's Great Creation"

For all ages - youth and youth groups welcome with chaperones

Register at [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com)

\$8/person | Ages 5 and under are free

*(Optional overnight accommodations Friday night for \$20/person)*

Washington, D.C., and Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp  
(Fort Valley, Virginia)

## **Synod-wide Service of Holy Communion with the Rite of Installation for Pastor Kevin Shock**

Sunday, July 24, 3 p.m.

Location to be determined.

## **Confirmation Camp**

Sunday, June 19 - Thursday, June 23

A supplemental week to your confirmation program where pastors, youth leaders and lay ministers join their confirmands for a week of learning in a camp environment.

Go to [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com) for registration and pricing information.

## **Synod Day at DelGrosso's Amusement Park**

Monday, Aug. 1, 11:00 a.m. to 8 p.m.

\$21.95/person

All ages, young to young-at-heart are welcome to join us for a day of fun at the park with an afternoon worship service.

## **Youth Day at Kennywood**

Friday, July 1

7th-12th graders with leaders and chaperones (families welcome)

## **Synod Day at the Curve**

Sunday, Aug. 21

6 p.m. game | Tailgate prior at synod office

\$7/ticket

## **Synod Youth Gathering**

In lieu of National Youth Gathering

Wednesday, July 20 - Sunday, July 24

## **Synod-wide day of learning, fellowship and worship.**

Saturday, Sept. 24, 10 a.m.

Location to be determined

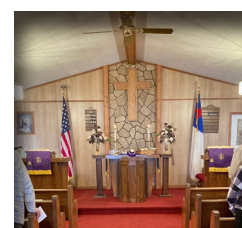


# ICYMI: SYNOD NEWS

Bishop Paula Schmitt and Assistant to the Bishop Kevin Shock visited these churches in recent weeks.



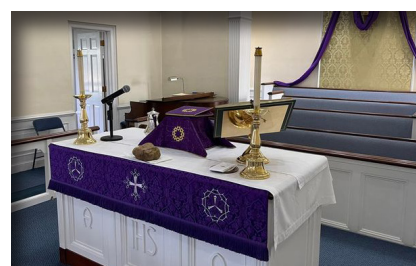
**Trinity Lutheran,  
Hooversville and Mt.  
Olivet, Sinking Valley.**



**Salem, Aaronsburg;  
Olanta Lutheran; and  
Cassville Lutheran.  
Below, First Lutheran,  
Johnstown; Mt. Zion,  
Huntingdon; and Grace,  
Bellwood.**



**Background photo: St.  
James, Altoona. Clock-  
wise: Trinity Lutheran,  
Sidman; Zion Lutheran,  
Everett; and St.  
Paul's, Mundy's Corner.**





# BISHOP 1

*(Continued from Page 2)*

One more thing on my list is to continue to find ways to share what Pastor Kevin Shock and I are calling "impact stories." During the next year or two The Lutheran Letter will contain a feature on a member of our Synod, which could be you! I have asked our pastors to nominate people from congregations they serve to answer some questions and be interviewed by our editor, Rick Kazmer. The stories will likely focus on the impact your faith has had on your life. There also may be some interesting information about you included. Our hope is to build or rebuild relationships throughout our synod and to learn ways that we might participate in ministry opportunities.

Here's my impact story. I grew up in a Lutheran family. We went to a Lutheran church a few towns over from where we lived because it was the congregation in which my mother grew up.

**(See BISHOP 2, Page 16)**

# SINGING 1

*(Continued from Page 12)*

Guitar music is sometimes used, as well as electronic instruments, but these also require musicians who have studied music and are able to play well and can enhance the worship experience. A commitment to attend regular services and to be available at other important times in the life of the congregation is important.

Finally, the quote from Isaiah suggests that even nature adds to the joy of singing praises to God. From the gentle tap-

ping of rainfall, to the brilliance of the sun, from the multitudes of stars, to the beauty of blooming trees and flowers, God shares with us in creating art — music, being just one way. And the sound of the human voice singing, regardless of volume or pitch, articulation or tone, warmth or harshness, pleases God and edifies the listener when performed with faith, joy, hope and love as its inspiration.

**"Sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things!" -- Psalm 98 †**

# ENDORSED!



*Photo from the Synod Facebook page*

**Vicar Regina Holliday has been endorsed by the Allegheny Synod Candidacy Committee. Endorsement is the middle step in the candidacy process and allows Regina to begin internship and further develop her pastoral skills. She is in the TEEM program through United Lutheran Seminary and serves the Journey In Faith parish in the Laurel Highlands conference.**



## BISHOP 2

*(Continued from Page 15)*

I was a “third generation” member of the congregation and participated in choir, youth group, council, lay eucharistic ministry and education. After I married, I moved to that same town and continued to be part of the ministry there; I even ended up working there after my son was born and before I went to seminary. It was in that congregation my faith was nurtured by many faithful, caring people. The seeds of faith were planted in me in my baptism in October 1967, but the people of that congregation were the ones who watered it, fed it, tilled the soil and made it grow. As I grew up and started hearing the words discernment and call, I started wondering about the stirrings that were happening in me. That’s what I did for a while — I just wondered. Eventually, after someone asked me if I ever thought about seminary, I stopped ignoring those stirrings and paid more attention. The question was a point of impact for me. Someone saw gifts in me and had the courage to ask the question.

A close friend of my grandparents, said, “we always knew you would go to seminary.” I believe a large part of my spiritual journey was impacted by the people in that congregation. The friend of my grandparents was an adult Sunday school teacher and because they were part of my life outside the congregation, they always made it a point to talk to me at church. They would ask about my week at school or a project I was working on or whether I thought the Eagles might win the football game. (Yes, friends, I started out as an Eagles fan . . .) If I missed church, they

would ask me the following week why I wasn’t there — I was missed. At the time, I didn’t have the warm feeling I have about it now. I felt like maybe they were nagging. They weren’t. They were living out their baptismal covenant by taking seriously the call to nurture the seeds of faith they saw in me. They made an impact on me. The woman who took me on as part of her team to take the eucharist to home-bound people even though I was in high school made an impact. The custodian who would make sure the doors were locked but the hall lights were left on so I could get to my car safely made an impact. All of these people, and many others, made an impact on me and my journey of faith.

You are having an impact on people and you may not realize it. I didn’t just listen to the people who encouraged me, I learned from them and I still carry with me some of those lessons. My leadership has been shaped by their gifts and witness. The gifts you use in your community witness to your faith. You are making an impact. As I travel throughout our synod, I see how you are doing it. You are cooking meals, sewing quilts, collecting and distributing food and clothing, sponsoring seminarians, assembling health kits, teaching Sunday School, reading lessons, setting up for Holy Communion, driving people to appointments and more. You are making an impact and we want to hear about it.

There are many more things on my list; some of which I won’t get to now. One thing I have on my list, every day, is to pray for all of you.

**(See BISHOP 3, Page 19)**

# The Director's Take

## *News of Note from the Director of Evangelical Mission*

By **PASTOR KEVIN SHOCK**

*Assistant to the Bishop & Director of Evangelical Mission*

Not long after I arrived in my first call, I heard a story about the congregation's abundance. Several years prior many people were talking about how much they desired air conditioning.

The leadership in the congregation at the time heard this need and decided to take the steps to meet it. Within a week of announcing their intention to install an air conditioning system, they had the money to pay for it. This is just one example of how stewardship and evangelism go hand-in-hand.

Maybe you're wondering what air conditioning has to do with evangelism. Admittedly, the above example is only loosely tied to evangelism, but I encourage you to broaden your idea of what evangelism is. At its root, evangelism is telling the good news of Jesus. We might expand our understanding of evangelism to include anything that helps us to share the story of Jesus, his hospitality, and his undying love for us. If an air conditioner makes the worship space more inviting, then it may be an evangelism tool. This example also shows that when a need is clearly expressed and a story is told well, people are inspired to give beyond what they normally would, and healthy stewardship is modeled. There are two other examples from



**Pastor Kevin Shock**

my first call that illustrate this connection.

One year the council asked an expert from Penn State to give the congregation an accessibility assessment, as we were exploring how to make the basement social room easier to access. After

the assessment it seemed that the best option — though not the least expensive — was to cut a hole in the floor and build a fully enclosed lift. An idea to enhance our ministry suddenly turned into a \$60,000 project. The leaders spent a lot of time writing stories about the ministries already happening and how improved accessibility would enhance those ministries and make our building inviting to a greater population. We told those stories and received a grant. We told those same stories and raised a down payment and collected sufficient pledges. We took out a loan to pay for the project in full. When the lift was completed and the congregation saw how many more people were able to participate in our ministry, the loan was paid in full five years early. Telling the story of Jesus and his welcome, and seeing that hospitality in action, inspired people to give beyond what they normally would.

**(See DEM, Page 18)**

# What **DREAMS** for ministry do you want to **TALK ABOUT** with your pastor or lay leaders?

## **DEM**

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*(Continued from Page 17)*

This congregation also has a history of supporting feeding ministries in our community.

As the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, leadership began to wonder if there were any gaps to fill in curbing hunger. In that community there were not many easy options for emergency food needs, so council invited the congregation to give shelf-stable staple foods and supplies to a Little Food Pantry on our front porch.

The invitation also went out to the community to “take what you need, and give what you can.” We were surprised, both at the amount of food being used and at the abundance of food showing up on our porch. Last Christmas, someone left a poinsettia in our side entrance with a card.

Our next door neighbor, unaffiliated with our congregation, had written the

story of how she went to buy supplies every two weeks for the pantry and how grateful she was to participate in our ministry. As the story of Jesus’s abundance spread, the Holy Spirit moved people to give beyond what they normally would.

Evangelism — telling and living the story of the great love we have received from God in Christ — is directly tied to stewardship — how we are moved to give ourselves and to use the resources we have been given. What are the stories you can tell about God’s ministry in your congregation? What dreams for ministry do you want to talk about with your pastor or lay leaders? How have you been inspired to give for the sake of God’s people and for the sake of good news? May God’s Spirit move you and everyone in our synod to go and tell, to live and give.

Amen. †



# BEFORE *you* GO

It's nearly time for the convoy to move out.

We have been watching a lot of westerns lately and the Conestoga wagon trains on many of the shows remind me of something familiar.

Soon, we will be hooking up the camper for our summer slate of trips to state parks in the area. Unlike the pioneers on TV, we won't be making a new life in a strange land. But the break from the routine of work and day-to-day life always feels like a journey. Our approximate 20-foot-long camper is likely about the same size as one of the old wagons.

We are carrying pots, pans, bedding and all the other things necessary to make a home in the wilderness.

We will be cooking food over an open fire, fishing on lakes and hiking through the woods. We won't need to ford a river on the way.

I always get a little nervous before the first trip. Hooking the camper to the truck and towing it isn't especially difficult. But a lot is riding on a little ball of metal. There's a lot of weight and pressure involved. We always say a prayer before we pull out, to be safe. Once we are on the road the feel of the truck and trailer become familiar and the rest of the trips become second nature again.

It's a great way to escape for a while, to enjoy the region's landscapes and to spend time with family and friends.

I hope you find great adventures this summer, be it at the campground, on the golf course or even in your own backyard.

-- Rick Kazmer, editor

## BISHOP 3

(Continued from Page 16)

We are the body of Christ together and I believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to find ways to rebuild relationships and strengthen our bond in Christ so we will continue

the good work started in us in our baptism.

May Christ's presence with you be a delight. †

+Bishop Paula

**Lutheran Church of  
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