

## OTHER COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

### ELCA MISSION INVESTMENT FUND

The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) of the ELCA serves this synod by providing loans for capital projects to established congregations, new mission congregations and ELCA-related ministries. Loans are made possible by investments in the Fund by congregations and their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries.

More than 710 MIF loans totaling \$382 million are in effect today in ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries throughout the United States, the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean.

In the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, 12 congregations have received Mission Investment Fund loans totaling \$1.67 million, while many individuals and 90 congregations and this synod have investments in the Fund totaling \$4.5 million.

**MIF serves ELCA ministries.** In addition to the loans and investments that it offers, the Mission Investment Fund provides services to congregations and ELCA-related ministries through its church building consultants and staff architects. The consultants help congregational leaders to explore feasible options for church construction financing and plans for building projects. The staff architects provide initial schematic design proposals that a congregation can take to a local architect. The consultants' and architects' services are provided at no charge. The Fund's area representatives are available to meet with congregations and ELCA-related ministries regarding loan and investment opportunities.

**Have you invested? Has your congregation?** Join the thousands of individuals, ELCA congregations and synods – including the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod – that are helping to build the Lutheran church as they earn interest on their investments. Your participation is vital to the future of the Fund and the ELCA. A variety of investment opportunities are available and may be opened with an initial investment of as low as \$25. Information on investments and loans is available at [www.MissionInvestmentFund.org](http://www.MissionInvestmentFund.org).

Thank you for your support of the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA.

*Mark Wimmer, area representative*  
*Jeff Spann, church building consultant*

### EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN COALITION FOR MISSION IN APPALACHIA (ELCMA)

ELCMA “*Connects and Equips God's People for Christ's Mission in Appalachia*” by working in three strategy areas. Using them as framework, I will attempt to itemize some of the ministry we engaged in during 2006:

#### **1. EQUIPPING FOR OUTREACH - ELCMA partners with other entities of the church to equip the saints, to reach out and witness to the Gospel in Appalachia by**

- Publicizing events such as “*Just Neighbors*” training in WV, Power in the Spirit in VA Synod, Region 9 Consultation on Global Mission, Hunger and Poverty, and a variety of events in central PA available to multiple Appalachian Synods.
- Producing and circulating materials like SCS material, Handbook for Small Churches and “*Just Neighbors*.”
- Training events such as Grant Writers for Beginners and Assessment & Preparation for New Ministries.
- Supporting and encouraging and resourcing new mission starts and reconfiguring congregations in conjunction with their Mission Directors such as meeting with new ministry starts in SC and WV.
- Mentoring an intern, Sara Tavela, for eight weeks, from the Servant Summer Program, a partnership between Regions 7, 8, & 9 of the ELCA, and LTSS, LTSG, & LTSP along with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

#### **2. ADVOCATING FOR JUSTICE - ELCMA, along with other ELCA entities as well as ecumenical partners, witnesses with the people in Appalachia to advance human rights and justice in**

- Environmental issues being addressed through an electronic network as we move to our inaugural advocacy summit in December of 2007 for Lutheran, ecumenical and grass-roots community groups to collaborate on education and advocacy issues of interest to us all.

- Addressing realities of poverty and injustice such as a new project in SC Synod aimed at ending the injustices in food distribution for the hungry.
- Diversity Awareness training has begun in earnest at our annual assembly in Birmingham, AL by visiting the Civil Rights Museum and talking out some of the issues it surfaced. ELCMA Council is reading and discussing *"Dismantling Racism"* with two leaders trained in anti-racism work. We are working to make sure our immersions focus on the racism issues in the area of the immersion.

### 3. NETWORKING - ELCMA builds relationships and connects resources with opportunities through

- Encouraging first call clergy, Joyce Dix-Weiers and Steve Bond, to name two, with visits, listening, praying with/for, connecting, and resourcing their projects.
- Conducting various immersions for individuals like Loretta Horton from the Unit on Church in Society and groups like the Women of the ELCA, expanding the network, informing people outside the region on issues and assets in the region, building cooperation and growing resources for everyone.
- ELCMA's Annual Appalachian Assembly, our number one networking tool, was held in Birmingham AL, Southeastern Synod, in 2006 offering us a peek at ministry in the Deep South.

Each of the sixteen Appalachian Synods plays a pivotal role in this ministry. In addition to financial gifts, you send delegates to the annual assemblies, loan leadership for various task groups and committees and include ELCMA in synodical activities. These people continue the work of ELCMA in the various small towns and rural places for all of us. Finally, your partnership in prayer for ELCMA and for the ministries in the quarterly Prayer Invitations is your greatest gift to us. Thank you for your continued participation with ELCMA. I look forward to our continued cooperative efforts in the future.

*Dory Campbell, coordinator*

#### LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA (LAMPa)

***Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God's love for all that God has created.***

LAMPa advocates in the places of power, where decisions are made, for those whose voices have been muted by oppression and economic injustice. The General Assembly and other state government agency policymakers are central focal points for this advocacy.

Social Statements and Messages of the ELCA and Lutheran theological understanding of the role of government are the foundation for LAMPa's advocacy. Two primary issues have been selected for the 2007-2008 legislative session:

- Poverty/Hunger
- Health/Health Care

No amount of direct advocacy with policymakers in Harrisburg can equal the power of voters...in LAMPa's case, the voices of Lutherans who take seriously their faith as they seek justice for all people. By sharing resources, conducting adult issue forums and doing advocacy training, LAMPa seeks to equip Lutherans in PA to become advocates.

- *InterSections* is a quarterly newsletter that highlights significant public policy issues, provides commentary and reflection, and signals important statewide events.
- *ACTIONET* is a growing network of Lutherans who take seriously their role as "citizens with faith." They write, call, and visit legislators to share their commitment to the basic worth of all people and to the responsibility of government to serve the common good. *ACTIONET* is central to how Lutheran advocacy happens in PA.

#### 2006 in Review

- LAMPa is strong. It has gone through a transition but has been active in the State Capitol during this past year.
- Over 100 Lutherans gathered in Harrisburg on March 28 for Lutheran Day at the Capitol.
- Positive outcomes in legislation happened in these areas: Regulations related to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Child Abuse Laws; and the Minimum Wage.
- LAMPa has reframed itself so that it can have two professionals beginning this fall.
- LAMPa has fully engaged the Seminaries and the Social Ministry Organizations.

A word of gratitude to the Northeastern PA Synod for its financial support, for the vision and commitment to justice of Bishop David Strobel, and

the leadership of LAMPa Public Policy Council members, the Rev. Jay Serafin and the Rev. Carol Kehler, whose terms have now ended. Judith Gifford and Kenneth Miller have been appointed to the Council to serve a three-year term, effective January 1, 2007.

*Neil P. Harrison, executive director*

## LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Annual Meeting of the Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania was held on October 28, 2006 in the Brossman Center of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in conjunction with the Lutheran Archives Center's Congregational Heritage Workshop. The Brossman Center is the new home of the Lutheran Archives Center, located in the basement of this building.

From time to time there seems to be some misunderstanding about church archives and the Archives Center. Some people quite frankly see little value in archives or in preserving or recording church history. Others view the Archives as a place underground to store the remains of dead churches. They see this as some kind of cemetery or mausoleum. I can appreciate how people might get this impression. After all the Archives Center is underground and records of dead churches are indeed stored there. But the Archives Center is much more than a storage place.

This perception extends also to those in the Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania. After all we visit the archives regularly, we lament the losses, we make contributions and memorials and we write and talk about these dead congregations. But the Lutheran Historical Society is much more than rememberers and recorders of the past.

Over the past year we have made strides to learn about and celebrate the ministries of several historical congregations in Eastern Pennsylvania. We have also used history to further ecumenical intentions and seen how the church has made an impact on our society.

We began the year with our traditional luncheon at Moselem Springs on February 4, 2006. At that meeting Dr. Mahlon Hellerich spoke on the Ministerium of Pennsylvania during World War II. On April 22, 2006 we visited St. John's in Allentown and heard a program by Frank Whelan of the *Morning Call* on Rev. S. A. Repass, a Confederate Soldier and Pastor. August 19, 2006 we combined a visit to the Mennonite Heritage Center with a tour of Little Zion in Telford.

In addition to our traditional "Happenings" and "Pilgrimages", we are working to produce and publish a *Guide to Colonial Lutheran Sites and Churches in Eastern Pennsylvania*. The book spans a period from 1655 to 1776. So far over 175 sites have been identified and are being researched. We are also reviewing the Ross Photograph Collection. We have also published two issues of the *Periodical*, under the able editorship of Dr. Mahlon Hellerich. Dr. Hellerich was honored this past year for his many of years of service to the society.

None of this would be possible without support of our members, board and officers. All serve as volunteers. Thank you all for caring for and about the rich Lutheran heritage, which we have inherited in Eastern Pennsylvania. To slightly misquote Henry Muhlenberg: "The church must be planted; it also must be cared for so it might grow and bear fruit."

*Richard B. Baumann, president.*

## LUTHERAN PLANNED GIVING OF CENTRAL AND NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Lutheran Planned Giving of Central and Northeastern Pennsylvania brings together the ministry partners in our area along with the churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to promote charitable giving. As the director of Lutheran Planned Giving and a charitable gift planner for the Foundation of the ELCA, I am ready to provide donor education, assist donors with their donations, work with congregations as they establish a mission endowment fund, and assist congregations to grow their funds. These services are available to any Lutheran congregation or ministry without charge or obligation.

As I begin my 5<sup>th</sup> year as director of the Lutheran Planned Giving Program of Central and Northeastern PA, I am continually amazed at the generosity of God's people as they respond to those in need locally and around the world. Their gifts not only provide for those in need but also give thanks to God. (II Cor. 9:12)

In 2006, I began the process of visiting all the conferences and/or mission districts of the four synods I serve. I conducted 15 Legacy Seminars and made 17 mission endowment consults helping congregations establish endowment funds. I made 189 donor calls which resulted in 26 irrevocable gifts totaling \$373,000 and 3 revocable gifts totaling \$710,000. I also assisted congregations and institutions in my service area invest in the Pooled Trust Fund A, which is a balance fund investment managed by the ELCA for the benefit of any ELCA related ministry.

In 2006, the ELCA provided several training opportunities for me. First, the regional gift planners and the senior staff of the Foundation of the ELCA met twice for staff training. In conjunction with the February staff meeting, I attended the Association of Lutheran Development Executives annual conference in Columbus, Ohio. In October and again in November, I attended the College of William and Mary National Planned Giving Institute workshops, "Building Relationships and Constructing Gift Plans" and "An Overview of Taxes, The Estate Planning Process and Creative Gift Planning Opportunities." Additionally, I am a member of the Planned Giving Council of Central Susquehanna Valley, a local chapter of the National Committee on Planned Giving. In 2006, I attended four educational seminars presented by the Planned Giving Council.

Finally, thank you very much for your support. Without your financial support, words of wisdom and encouragement, and especially your prayers, I would not have been able to accomplish what I did. Your support is essential to the success of this program. I would like to especially thank the steering committee who oversees the operation of the program on behalf of all the members. For more information about the Lutheran Planned Giving Program or to schedule a Legacy Seminar, please contact me at 570-374-2044 or [kramerga@ptd.net](mailto:kramerga@ptd.net).

*Gregory A. Kramer, director*

### **PENNSYLVANIA LUTHERAN NETWORK**

The Pennsylvania Lutheran Network seeks to bring together the multi-faceted ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to further the mission of our Church through collaboration.

The Network invites social ministry organizations, outdoor ministries, synods, campus ministries, the advocacy office, and colleges/universities to engage one another to share expertise and discover common interests that might lead to the development of new shared ministry opportunities.

The Network gathered for their annual assembly March 13-14, 2007 in Gettysburg.

The Network is led by a Planning Council that meets three or four times each year. While the major event is the annual assembly, the Council provided a board development workshop with more than sixty participants in October 2006.

The Council is exploring means to increase communication among the network partners that could

expand our efforts to be more effective and efficient in collaboration.

More information about PLN is available on the web at [www.palutherannetwork.org](http://www.palutherannetwork.org).

*Ralph E. Jones, convener*

### **POCONO AREA LUTHERAN MINISTRY (PALM)**

People continue to flock to the Poconos and we continue to attempt to minister to and with them. Worship times are held weekly in a number of campgrounds thanks to the good work of nearby congregations. Hiking and canoe trips are enjoyed throughout the summer in the Delaware River Recreation Area. If you or a group of people would like to partake of such an adventure, contact Pastor Glenn Simmons at the Pocono office of our synod.

Also, our committee, along with the summer interns who conduct the various services of worship throughout the summer, led a campground type of worship at St. John's, Stroudsburg this past May. We are now in conversation with some of the synod assembly planners so that we might offer that type of worship at next year's Synod Assembly. Thus all of you might experience what happens in campground ministry.

As always we need more help to reach out to more people. If you, a group in your congregation, or your congregation would like to learn more about becoming involved in this ministry, please contact Pastor Simmons at 570-421-8429. In the meantime, see you at worship in a local campground in the Pocono Mountains!

*Lynn Rothrock, chair*

### **REGION 7**

Region 7 is the "meeting point" for the six synods of the ELCA located in the Northeast, and the non-geographical Slovak-Zion synod. Located on the campus of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, the region seeks to enhance relationships and work among the partner synods, the seminary, the churchwide office of the ELCA and other ministries located on our territory.

This year the Region 7 office has supported the mission of the church in the Northeast in the following areas:

- Candidacy: participation in 25 synod candidacy meetings (in six synods), facilitation of Theo-

logical Review Panels at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for candidates coming to the ELCA from other traditions, convening the annual consultation for candidacy leaders, offering ongoing training and support to synod staff and candidacy committees.

- Coordinating First Call Assignment for the region
- Coordinating and directing the Institute for Congregational Ministry (our regional continuing education event for first call leaders)
- Coordinating the annual regional gathering for bishops' staff
- Coordinating meetings of the regional Reconciling in Christ roundtable
- Coordinating gatherings of Christian Education and Lifelong Learning networks
- Facilitating the registration and arrangements for the Board of Pensions Pre-retirement meetings
- Providing support for the planning of the regional youth gathering

Leadership in Region 7 is provided by the steering committee: Rev. Bruce Davidson, chair; Bishop. David Strobel; Rev. Mark Wimmer, treasurer; Rev. Beth Anderson; Rev. Nancy Brown.

*Peggy Wuertele, coordinator*

## **WOMEN OF THE ELCA**

It is a sad fact that the number of Congregational Units (CU) in the NEPA Synod Women of the ELCA is decreasing. The good news is that some small groups are combining with others in nearby churches to form Intercongregational Units. In other synods, Special Units have been created at universities and even retirement communities. This organization of Lutheran women is extremely versatile and exists in many forms. The old well-known "circles" are few in number. Most CUs in this area are organized around programs featuring speakers, handcraft projects, Bible study or service projects. Some meet only quarterly, others monthly. Whatever form they take, all units provide a community of personal support and spiritual enrichment for the women of the church, who are the participants.

The Synod Wide Organization (SWO) provides continuity for the individual CUs, and is responsible for suggested programming through the 9 Clusters (Mission Districts) as well as larger events for all the women in the NEPA Synod. For a number of years there have been Cluster Plan-

ning Events each year in the spring and fall. The leaders of all nine clusters gather to get program ideas, which they then may duplicate or use as a guide for their own semi-annual meetings.

NEPA Synod events for Women / ELCA have most recently followed a pattern of three per year. They include a Spiritual Growth Retreat in the early spring, a June Convention and a Fall Learning Event. A theme is chosen for each meeting so that all worship, study and hands-on experiences fit together, bringing a sense of community and continuity to the day.

In 2006, the theme of the Spiritual Growth Retreat, which took place at Faith Church, Blakeslee was "You Are Precious In My Sight". The June Convention at St. Daniel, Robesonia followed with "Keep In Step With The Spirit". "Act Boldly With Joy" was the premise for the Fall Learning Event at Weisenberg Church in New Tripoli. Knotted quilts and dozens of kits were completed for distribution by LWR. Similar events for 2007 are in various stages of planning.

The Spiritual Growth Retreat this year took place on March 3, 2007 at Jerusalem Church in Schuylkill Haven. Keynote Speaker, The Rev. Walter Wagner addressed the question, "Joy or Sorrow – Do We Have a Choice?" On June 23, the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention will convene at St. Paul's, Tannersville with the theme "Spirit Led, Spirit Fed". Jon Pahl, of the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia will be the featured speaker as the women of the NEPA Synod celebrate 20 years with the Women / ELCA.

We offer our thanks to Bishop Strobel and the Staff of the Synod Office, who support the women's organization by providing linkage with churches throughout the synod.

*Gale H. James, president*