

PARTNERS IN  
*the spirit*  
NOVEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

A Transforming Impact: 2004  
Crossroads Event

Impassioning Faith: 2004 Summer  
Theological Academy

The Holy Hand Truck

Lucinda Francisco Receives Scholarship

Split Rock Ecumenical Youth Group  
Day a Hit



This past summer, 10 high school youth from Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod tasted the Spirit's transforming power in the two retreat ministries of **Theological Education with Youth (TEY)**.

Now completing its fifth year of ministry, TEY offers two intensive summer events focusing on vocational and theological exploration. One event is the one-week **Crossroads** event for youth who have just completed tenth grade. Crossroads gathers up to 36 youth and 12 adult faculty, mentors, and staff for one week of journeying and growing. Centered at the **Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg**, Crossroads Event goals are to -



- Experience public ministry contexts where the gospel intersects the world
- Discover the many callings and ways of serving in these ministries
- Explore theological themes of service, justice and God's reign, and vocation.



The second retreat ministry is the two-week **Summer Theological Academy**. This event is for youth who have just completed eleventh grade.

The academy's goals are to strengthen in



young people a passionate, reflective, and constructive love of theology for the sake of God's world and to invite young people to listen for God's call to express that love in leadership within the church. During the event, youth are given the opportunity to explore faith for real life in a diverse and vibrant community. They participate in learning through courses for the whole academy and in intimate, seminar-sized groups. Participation also includes classic and creative worship, reflection groups, and a variety of recreational activities.

For the second year in a row, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod was strongly represented in these events, with five youth in each. The synod's Leadership Development Ministry Team provided significant encouragement in the form of scholarships to all 10 participants.

This year, all 10 of the synod participants received \$100 scholarships (above and beyond other forms of scholarship available through Region 7, ELCA), through the synod's **Leadership Development Ministry Team**. Kathy Schaeffer, chair of the ministry team and director of Christian education and family ministries at Friedens Lutheran Church, Oley, celebrates the transformation taking place through ministries of TEY. "Many young leaders of our synod have discovered new ways to articulate their faith, and new callings, through these unique activities," she says. "TEY is stirring the waters of our churches and the witness of young people in remarkable ways. I'm glad our synod and our ministry team are partners in such promising work."

These two events on the following dates in 2005:

- **Crossroads** Event: June 19-25, 2005
- **Summer Theological Academy**: July 2-16, 2005

PARTNERS IN  
*the spirit*  
NOVEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

A Transforming Impact:  
2004 Crossroads Event

Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

A Transforming Impact: 2004  
Crossroads Event

Impassioning Faith: 2004 Summer  
Theological Academy

The Holy Hand Truck

Lucinda Francisco Receives Scholarship

Split Rock Ecumenical Youth Group  
Day a Hit



*Kate Hartman, one of the synod's participants in Crossroads, is pictured second from left.*

For the second year, the **Crossroads** Event June 20 to June 26, 2004, featured vibrant community life and four immersion journeys.

The community life (worship, play, reflection groups and common meals) was hosted at the **Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg**.

The immersion journeys featured ministries of advocacy, urban community and hospitality, international relief and development, and lifecare. Places included **Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa)** in Harrisburg and **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)** in Baltimore, Maryland. Visits included presentations and thoughtful dialogue on vocation with professionals who are living out their baptisms in these important callings.

With LAMPa, the 21 youth participants learned about the issue of expanding legalized gambling. They also attended a rally in the State Capitol building that featured public witness by a diverse group of spokespersons, including several Lutherans.



During the visit with LIRS, participants were captivated and encouraged by the witness of Ms. **Christine Gedim**, a Sudanese woman who shared her story of loss and exile - and hope - during Sudan's years of terrible civil war. Christine now serves with LIRS in refugee resettlement and support, and speaks vividly about her work as a true calling from God.



Christine Gedim

In the words of Kate Hartman of Bern Evangelical Lutheran Church, Leesport, the 2004 Crossroads Event was "AMAZING! I don't even think I'll know how to describe it - people will just see the change in me and know how powerful it was."

For Kate, the event had a transforming impact on her own relationship with God - and on her readiness to articulate it - and provided a window into an array of different ministries to which God calls Christians. "I never knew how many different professions can be 'called,'" said Kate. "It was really cool to make that connection."



Since the Crossroads Event, Kate has found ways to describe the range of transforming experiences she had in the Crossroads Event. She was one of six youth presenters in the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia's Seminary Day in the third week of September. (Kate is at far left in the picture, above, taken at Seminary Day.)

Along with Kate, other Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod youth participants included Elizabeth Arnold of St. John, Sayre, Amanda Bernecker of Good Shepherd, Wilkes-Barre, Stephen Felty of St. Paul, Auburn and Emily Koch of Trinity, Tipton.

PARTNERS IN  
*the spirit*  
NOVEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Impassioned Faith:  
2004 Summer Theological Academy

Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

A Transforming Impact: 2004  
Crossroads Event

Impassioned Faith: 2004 Summer  
Theological Academy

The Holy Hand Truck

Lucinda Francisco Receives Scholarship

Split Rock Ecumenical Youth Group  
Day a Hit



*Pictured left to right: Miguel Aliaga, Caitlin Newman, Bill Bixby (TEY director), Nettie-Rose Reynolds, and Dan Eisenberg. Seated: Todd Ebling.*

The fifth **Summer Theological Academy** of TEY (Theological Education with Youth) was held July 3 to July 17 at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.

In the two-week event, youth scholars engaged in lively theological exploration in two courses; participated in and led Morning and Evening Prayer; created song, fabric banners and dance in special interest groups; and participated in servant learning immersions in two Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod congregations - Christ and Hope, both in Reading.

Two of the five synod participants, Daniel Eisenberg of St. John, Jim Thorpe Heights, and Caitlin Newman of St. Paul, Easton, were selected by the 20 youth participants as stewards, or youth leaders, of the Academy community.

One of the special fruits of the Academy within the synod has been the new connections forged among youth and among congregations. In September, Dan made a Sunday visit to Caitlin's congregation to share word of the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) ministries of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, of which Dan is a leader and officer.



In his remarks about the Academy, Dan - who also participated in the Crossroads Event in the summer of 2003 - says the event "enlivened and impassioned my faith and love toward others ... again!"

Dan talks about the unique depth of community in the Academy. "The most nourishing aspect of the event was the community of love formed with friends, with mentors and with faculty."

Caitlin and Dan will also be helping plan and coordinate the upcoming retreat and reunion of Academy scholars, set for December 10-12 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

Also representing Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in the 2004 Summer Theological Academy were Miguel Aliaga of San Martin de Porres, Allentown, Todd Ebling of Allegheny, Knauers, and Nettie-Rose Reynolds of St. Paul, Easton.



## The Holy Hand Truck

Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

A Transforming Impact: 2004  
Crossroads Event

Impassioning Faith: 2004 Summer  
Theological Academy

The Holy Hand Truck

Lucinda Francisco Receives Scholarship

Split Rock Ecumenical Youth Group  
Day a Hit



*[Editor's note: This article was written by Pastor Barry Mitchell, Emmanuel's, Emanuelsville, and included in his daily email devotions, "Today's Stuff," on October 3, 2004.]*

We had a baptism today. We like to involve the whole congregation and that means putting the baptismal font (which normally resides at the entrance of the church - an appropriate place, but one that cannot easily be used for baptisms) up front where all can see and participate.

However, our sanctuary doesn't have a lot of extra room. Built in 1850, it was designed for another era. With communion at each service, the baptismal font blocks the way to and from the altar area when we use it for baptisms.

We've tried a variety of ways to move it and still maintain some decorum in worship. Two men battling it down the aisle was not the answer. So we put wheels on it.

Unfortunately, the wheels didn't roll too smoothly, and it still took two or three people to nurse it down the aisle.



Finally, one man in the congregation had a brainstorm. "I have an idea to fix the baptismal font problem," Clarence "Bud" Hower announced one Sunday after church. "I found a hand truck at a yard sale. It will be great." I wasn't so sure. I pictured a bright red hand truck with peeling paint and the



gasps of the congregation as we loaded the font onto it. He said it would take a few weeks to get it looking good. I had my doubts.



**Robert Bennett loads baptismal font**

A few weeks later, he showed up at church with the hand truck. The metal frame was carefully painted to match the font, but the entire business part was beautifully covered in carpet. We loaded the font onto the hand truck and it

worked like a dream. One person could easily move it with little effort. The font was gently cushioned by the carpeting and a problem was solved.

After the first real trial, someone mentioned at the door how much they appreciated the Holy Hand Truck. Of course, the name stuck. Since then, the Holy Hand Truck has been a regular part of our baptismal services. Occasionally, visitors raise an eyebrow as it comes up the aisle, but when they see how it solves the problem, they smile.

Life gives lots of challenges, and on occasion, God's people rise to the challenge and find creative ways to solve problems. I smiled today as the Holy Hand Truck moved the font with grace and worship continued without a hitch. I wondered if we should find some way to dedicate it for service in the church - but liturgies for hand trucks are somewhat difficult to find.

We are blessed with wonderfully creative people who are working to use the space we have in the best possible ways. And, to the best of my knowledge, we may be the only congregation to have a Holy Hand Truck in Christendom.

PARTNERS IN  
*the spirit*  
NOVEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Lucinda Francisco  
Receives Scholarship



Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

A Transforming Impact: 2004  
Crossroads Event

Impassioning Faith: 2004 Summer  
Theological Academy

The Holy Hand Truck

Lucinda Francisco Receives Scholarship

Split Rock Ecumenical Youth Group  
Day a Hit

**ELCA Fund For Leaders In Mission Awards 31 Scholarships**

Lucinda Francisco, a member of Trinity, Topton, was one of 16 first-year students at the eight seminaries of the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)** who began the 2004-2005 academic year with full-tuition scholarships through the **ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission**. The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, ELCA presiding bishop, presented the full-tuition scholarships in a ceremony in Chicago Oct. 8.

Bishop Hanson told the gathering these seminarians personified the "ecology" of the ELCA. They were the products of Lutheran households and ELCA congregations, youth and outdoor ministry programs, and colleges and universities, he said. They were part of the ELCA theological education network and recipients of scholarships generated by relationships between donors, congregations and synods of the church.



The Fund for Leaders in Mission is an ELCA initiative to build an endowed scholarship resource that provides tuition assistance to qualified candidates studying at the church's

eight seminaries. It awarded its first eight scholarships in 2000. In 2003 the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation issued a challenge grant to match \$2 million in new contributions from individuals and congregations to the Fund with another \$1 million.



The Fund has already raised \$1.6 million toward meeting the Thrivent Foundation Challenge, said the Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, executive director, ELCA Foundation. He said the Fund plans to match the challenge and take delivery of a \$1 million check from the Thrivent Foundation at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Aug. 8-14, 2005, in Orlando, Fla.

Pastor Hallberg said the Fund's long-term goal is to have at least \$200 million in its endowment, so it can provide full-tuition scholarships for every student at ELCA seminaries who is committed to a future in parish ministry.

Information about the Fund for Leaders in Mission is at <http://www.elca.org/fo/FundforLeaders> on the website of the ELCA Foundation.



PARTNERS IN  
*the spirit*  
NOVEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Split Rock  
Ecumenical Youth Group Day a Hit

Tasting the Spirit's Transforming Power:  
Theological Education with Youth

A Transforming Impact: 2004  
Crossroads Event

Impassioning Faith: 2004 Summer  
Theological Academy

The Holy Hand Truck

Lucinda Francisco Receives Scholarship

Split Rock Ecumenical Youth Group  
Day a Hit



By Nancy Moore, Intern, Faith Lutheran Church, Blakeslee, Pa.

The band was SWIM, the weather was sunny, and over 375 youth and advisors had a great time at the 4th Annual Ecumenical Youth Group Day at Split Rock Resort on September 26, 2004!

Youth and their advisors of all different denominations flocked to Split Rock to join in fellowship as the guests of Jack Kalins and the Kalins family, owners of the Split Rock Resort.

Participants came from the Moravian church and from the United Methodist church; some were Lutherans; still others came from the United Church of Christ, the Wesleyan church and the Roman Catholic Church. All were gathered to engage in a great day of fellowship in games, mini-golf, and indoor swimming.

A special treat this year was an outdoor Christian rock concert put on by the band "SWIM," topped off by a barbecue at the lake provided by the Lodge kitchen and dining room staff.



This encounter was an awesome sight to behold as youth from all of these denominations joined in singing together, hearing scripture



from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and joining in a Litany for Peace from the World Council of Churches led by eight different youth from each denomination represented.



It was like feeling the Spirit of Pentecost in the Poconos, and surely the Spirit was upon us as we became "one in unity" that day!

Want more information about this event?  
Contact Nancy Moore at  
[nlmoore57@yahoo.com](mailto:nlmoore57@yahoo.com).

PARTNERS IN  
*the spirit*