

SYNOD NEWS

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

June 2011

I Am Confident That God Is at Work



I am confident that God is at work bringing new life in the midst of changes unfolding in all expressions of the ELCA. My confidence is generated by what I observe in various aspects of my ministry as synod bishop:

My confidence is strong because of what I observe during visits to congregations. Whether at a worship service or a meeting, I am impressed by the faith, the energy, and the desire to serve the gospel that I see in the eyes and hear in the voices of members and leaders alike. I make the visits with the intention of offering support, but I come away with the realization that I have received more than I gave.



My confidence is strong because of what I observe as we plan ways to revitalize our vision for ministry in this time. In early spring 2011, four *Do What Matters!* workshops drew nearly 800 members

from 121 congregations to begin looking at a different approach to ministry.

My confidence is strong because of what I observe at regular meetings with my Episcopal and Moravian full communion counterparts, Bishop Paul Marshall (Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem) and the Rev. David Bennett (President of the Eastern District—Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America). Praying for God's guidance, we have found a deeply collegial rapport.



My confidence is strong because of what I observe as we get closer to the move of the synod office to Schoenersville. Thanks to the generous gift of their church building from Christ

Lutheran Church, Schoenersville, we will move into our new headquarters this summer. Among the significant benefits to be gained are a sizeable nave, which becomes a powerful symbol of word and sacrament underpinnings to all that we do; an ample fellowship hall; updated and fully accessible facilities and systems, and a more open, welcoming configuration of space.



Above all, my confidence is strong because of God's faithfulness. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed: *But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.* (43:1-2a).



These words speak to me out of circumstances far more challenging than those of our time. They not only cultivate the assurance that my shortcomings do not get in God's way, but also they inspire with the promise that God leads me. I am therefore thankful to be called to serve this church in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

With confidence, then, I summon you to serve this church with me for Jesus' sake.

In his name,

Samuel R. Zeiser, bishop

(From the Report of the Bishop to the 2011 Synod Assembly. Full text in Executive Reports in the Bulletin of Reports. Click the link at www.godslove.org.)

Morning Prayer at the Lutheran Center

On **Thursday, April 28**, twelve people gathered for a brief service of Morning Prayer at what we are coming to know as the Lutheran Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania.



There were several surprises that morning at what had been Christ Lutheran Church, Schoenersville, and soon will house the offices of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

First, the layer of construction dust that had covered the nave was gone, thanks to the unexpected work the previous evening by Mr. and Mrs. Art Laudenschlager. Art had been the chairperson of the congregation’s property committee, and he and his wife wanted to church the be ready to start its new life. Unasked, they spent several hours vacuuming and dusting to get ready.



The next surprise was the worshippers themselves. Half of them were former members of Christ, Schoenersville, coming both to worship and to see what

changes were being made to their church. Some expressed gratitude—with great emotion—that the building would continue to serve the Church, rather than being sold to one of the neighboring industrial parks.

And it was striking, if not surprising, when the Scripture lessons appointed by the daily lectionary turned out to be profoundly suited to the occasion. A former member of the congregation stood to read the first lesson, from Ezekiel 37: “Thus says the LORD GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.”

Morning Prayer services will continue to be held every Thursday at 8:00 a.m. Join us as God does a new thing on Grove Road in Allentown.



MUHLBERG,
MALLS, and MISSION

June 17-18, 2011

LIFT (Lutherans in Faith Together) and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly

Join Lutherans from across northeastern Pennsylvania for the 2011 **LIFT (Lutherans in Faith Together)** event, the 2011 **synod assembly**, and the **LYF (Lutheran Youth Fellowship) assembly**.

To register, click the link on the synod home page at www.godslove.org.

Register now! The absolute deadline for registration for all three events is **June 3**.

Live Your Faith



Do Justice. Love Kindness.
Walk humbly with your God.

Lutheran Youth Fellowship (LYF) Assembly June 16-18, 2011

World Hunger Lock-In



A **World Hunger Lock-In**, the first-ever event of its kind, will be held **July 16-17** for youth from grades 7 through 12 in one church in each of the nine mission districts of our synod. A few of the things we are planning to do include—

- Raising money for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal
- Meeting other Lutheran youth from our synod
- SKYPING with each other (at each World Hunger Lock-In site)
- Games, Bible study, prayer, and so much more

For more information, visit the youth news and events page on the synod website, www.godslove.org/youth.