



BEAR CREEK CAMP

Explore, celebrate & grow in God's creation!

Greetings from Bear Creek Camp the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry for the Southeast and Northeast Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA.

The summer of 2017 was a great one at Bear Creek Camp!

- For the first time in over 20 years our summer camp attendance has increased FIVE years in a row. 2017 saw an increase of 14% over the previous summer and we are up 73% since 2013.
- 45 Summer staff members did an excellent job of showing and sharing the Gospel through activities, Bible studies, games, team building moments and having fun
- Campers, parents and chaplains were very encouraging of the current program that is in place at BCC.
 - Among the comments we received:
 - *Love the new cabins. My camper really loved them too. With the thunder storms rolling through, I felt safer knowing they had wood verses fabric between them and the elements. **Camper Parent***
 - *My daughter spent 2 weeks in Germany and 1 week at the beach prior to coming to camp. Bear Creek camp was by far her favorite week of the summer (and perhaps the entire year!). Keep up the great work you do!!! **Camper Parent***
 - *Thank you for making this the best 8 years of my life! This camp has made my life better. It's honestly saved my life! And made me become who I am, which is 100x more confident than ever! Thank you so much! **Camper***
 - *I love it because you can grow in your faith and have fun! **Camper***
- Our Church Day Camp program continues to grow as we will serve 13 churches this summer with our “on the road” day camp program.

Thank you Northeast and Southeast PA Synods and congregations for your ongoing support of the ministry at Bear Creek Camp. We are grateful to work in partnership with each of you and to be an extension of your ministries at our location near Wilkes-Barre. The enthusiasm for the ministry of Bear Creek Camp is spreading we are very excited about the months and years to come.

The financial and prayerful support of the camp by each synod is vital to our success. Your investment in Bear Creek Camp is just that – and investment. We are building up young people and leaders to be active members of our synod’s congregations to strengthen the church. Thank you for joining us in this mission.

Please continue to pray for Bear Creek Camp this summer as we have a great time exploring, celebrating and growing in God's creation.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Scharnhorst
Executive Director

LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, we advocate for wise and just public policies in Pennsylvania that promote the common good. Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is a shared ministry of seven Pennsylvania synods, the ELCA Domestic Mission unit, and Pennsylvania ELCA agencies and institutions. Through LAMPa, Lutherans who are working to eradicate hunger are supported to voice their faith convictions in the public square with and on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors and the world we share, while seeking to create a more just Commonwealth.

In 2017, LAMPa celebrated 38 years of advocacy ministry that supported and deepened your congregational efforts to address hunger, poverty, immigration, school funding inequity, racism and environmental injustice. Thanks be to God for the support of our Southeastern Synod Policy Council representatives, Diane Casey and the Rev. Lydia Posselt. In 2018, we also welcomed Ms. Lynn Fry, who joined LAMPa staff as program director after 12 years of faith formation service at St. Luke in Chambersburg, Lower Susquehanna Synod.

LAMPa advocacy takes place through staff work in the capital, partnerships with coalitions and engagement of Lutherans in letter-writing, email and call-in advocacy, legislative visits, offering of testimony, editorial writing, social media campaigns, press conferences and rallies. In 2017, we helped Lutherans commemorate the Reformation by becoming bold disciples, speaking up with and on behalf of their neighbors around the following issues: Hunger, Mental Health/Addiction, Racial Justice, Creation Justice, Immigration, Poverty/Housing/Employment and Education. Please consider offering your gifts or experience to any of these issue teams and contact LAMPa to become engaged!

Highlights of LAMPa advocacy in 2017 include:

Feeding the Hungry: In a tough budget year, Pennsylvania Lutherans helped prevent cuts in the line item that supports the commonwealth's most critical anti-hunger. The State Food Purchase Program remained stable at \$19.188 million. SFPP remains one of the commonwealth's most important tools in the fight against hunger and a lifeline for food banks across Pennsylvania. Many of our Lutheran food pantries rely on this program to supplement their ministries. The program provides cash grants to counties for the purchase and distribution of food to low-income individuals, including seniors. For years, the program has suffered from stagnant funding even as need rose dramatically.

The SFPP line item is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and supports programs such as the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). After completing a successful first year, PASS received \$1 million in continued funding.

We also celebrated the inclusion of an additional \$2 million in child nutrition funding for grants to incentivize improvements in the delivery of school breakfast so that more children can get a healthy start to their school day.

LAMPa advocates also successfully pushed for legislation that ended the practice of “lunch shaming,” meaning that school meal providers must take up issues of outstanding payments with parents or guardians, not students.

In addition, staff continued to work with statewide anti-hunger advocates to inform the work of the Governor’s Food Security Partnership. That partnership produced a “Blueprint for a Hunger-Free Pennsylvania,” which showed progress in the fight against hunger by its one-year anniversary in fall 2017.

Giving All Children a Better Chance at Academic Success – Pennsylvania Lutherans pressed lawmakers as part of the Campaign for Fair Education Funding to address the state’s rating as the least equitable in the country for education funding. This inequity has been leading to widening achievement gaps between wealthy and poor districts, as well as along racial lines. The efforts saw **a tremendous win in 2016 with the passage of HB 1552. The bill, which amends the Public School Code of 1949, requires all new funds in the K-12 allocation to be passed through the BEFC-approved formula,** received overwhelming bipartisan support. In 2017, Pennsylvania added \$100 million toward the goal of closing those gaps.

LAMPa staff continued to work toward coalition building for policies to promote trauma-responsive schools.

Addressing Poverty: LAMPa continued to fight attempts by predatory lenders to gain a foothold in Pennsylvania through proposals to introduce payday lending to the state.

Standing for Welcome – LAMPa worked to successfully stop legislation that sought to punish municipalities that adopted policies against honoring requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain undocumented persons without a warrant. Many Pennsylvania municipalities adopted such policies, citing increased work and cost for local law enforcement erosion of trust between local police and immigrant communities – threatening public safety for all.

LAMPa advocated for the closure of the Berks County detention center, where immigrant families, including small children, are held while awaiting decisions on their requests for asylum. The administration maintains that the facility is not licensed for that purpose, but the operator is appealing the decision. LAMPa advocates have been attending vigils at the center to show support for the families inside.

Connecting Service to Advocacy: LAMPa provided information, resources and support for congregations and conferences participating in the Churchwide Day of Service in September, garnering more than 1,000 letters to lawmakers on a variety of topics. This practice is being lifted up church-wide for this year's Day of Service.

In 2018, LAMPa will again be developing service-and-advocacy projects for congregations to engage in for the Churchwide Day of Service on Sept. 9. We would be glad to help your congregation plan to make that day one of "God's work. Our hands. Our voices."

Public Witness: In 2017, LAMPa coordinated the second "Ashes-to-Go" at the state capitol to mark the beginning of Lent. Clergy and lay leaders from several denominations offered prayers and anointing on the sidewalk and in the rotunda and were extremely well received.

Equipping Leaders: In addition to staff preaching and teaching around the synod, Lutheran Day in the Capital drew rostered and lay leaders from around the state to consider how we might be church together for the sake of the world, in Pennsylvania. All drew inspiration from our keynote, theologian and author Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, who reminded all of the gospel freedom, baptismal calling and Lutheran heritage that undergirds our advocacy in this time of deep division in the public square.

With deep gratitude for all the ways in which you support LAMPa's ministry,
Tracey DePasquale
LAMPa Director

THE LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania is a membership organization that focuses on congregations, institutions and events within the areas of the Southeastern and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA. We are your historical society and invite you to join us. Our synod areas include some of the oldest Lutheran congregations and sites in the country, over 125 dating from before 1776. The society regularly sponsors pilgrimages to historic congregations and sites. Each one provides us an opportunity to visit and see a congregation, its history and ministry and how it became a presence in the community in which it is located. We also publish a "Periodical" with articles of interest to the membership. We also promote the society at the two synod assemblies in our area. Several years ago we published the guidebook "Colonial Lutheran Churches and Historic Sites in Eastern Pennsylvania 1638-1775". This past year we arranged two pilgrimages. The first was to St. Michael's Germantown in August to celebrate over 275 years of ministry. There we had an opportunity to see the historic church and cemetery. The congregation is now closed. We also visited the Lutheran Archives Center and the Augustana Heritage Museum. In November we visited St. Peter's, Riegelsville, located along the Delaware River and the Delaware Lehigh Canal. In 2018 we anticipate visits to Trinity, Perkasië; Christ, Trumbauersville and St. Paul's, Catasauqua. There are nearly 500 congregations in Eastern Pennsylvania and we look forward to invitations from congregations who wish to share their story. Congregations don't have to be old or celebrating an anniversary. We also publish a scholarly "Periodical". Our current issue is still in the making. We also are in

the process of developing a website. We have sponsored congregation heritage awards and a recent essay contest to encourage student interest.

The Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania is a totally volunteer organization. All work is done by our members and our Board. I would like to thank our board for another year of faithful service. If you are interested please consider becoming a member, serving on the board or participating in our other activities. We are supported by membership dues and private contributions. Please share ideas that interest you and consider involving yourself in any special projects or activities. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Richard B. Baumann, President

LUTHERAN HOME AT GERMANTOWN FOUNDATION

Lutheran Home at Germantown Foundation receives, holds, and invests all endowment and similar funds of the corporation and raises, holds, and invests contributions for the support of social ministry organizations affiliated with the Church with particular reference to Silver Springs – Martin Luther School, recognizing the common heritage and historical ties between the corporation and Silver Springs – Martin Luther School.

The Foundation's continuing interest and investment in helping to meet the compelling needs of children who have faced steep challenges and pain, and so early in their lives, is the focus of its attention and the heartbeat of its mission.

Kristen E.M. Gay, Ph.D., President/CEO



Mission Investment Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) is the lending ministry of the ELCA. MIF makes Low-interest loans to ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries for building and renovation projects. With MIF loans, congregations and ministries can purchase property, construct new buildings, and expand or renovate existing facilities.

MIF loans expand the capacity for ministry. MIF loans help create expanded worship spaces, updated space for education and youth ministry, new kitchens for community meals and soup kitchens, affordable housing units for the community and much more.

At year-end 2017, MIF had 888 loans outstanding, totaling \$539.1 million.

To fund these loans, MIF offers a portfolio of investments for congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries to purchase. At year-end 2017, MIF investments totaled \$506 million.

MIF is a financially strong and stable organization, with a record of steady, controlled growth. With total assets of \$715.7 million and net assets of \$203.9 million at year-end 2017, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 28.5 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds. For more information, visit mif.elca.org.

MIF loans and investments in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (as of December 31, 2017):

- 25 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$18,086,835
- \$10,296,909 in Mission Investment Fund investments

MIF representative:

Gerry Lauro, Regional Manager, Tel: (312) 805-6502; email: gerry.lauro@elca.org

Mission Investment Fund | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, Illinois 60631 | Tel: 877-886-3522 | Web: mif.elca.org

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017. Their mission is to *build relationships of mutual support, offer a moral and spiritual voice in the region, and identify issues of concern for dialogue and action.* Co-convened by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Rabbi David Straus, Imam Anwar Muhaimin, and Bishop Claire Schenot Burkat, the Council celebrated its tenth anniversary. The council consists of over 32 member communities, representing more than two million people of diverse faith traditions from across the greater Philadelphia region. Council members include representatives from local Roman Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Baha'i, Baptist, Lutheran, Mormon, and many more faith communities.

Our first meeting of the year was hosted at the Methodist Home for Children by Bishop Peggy Johnson. The Religious Leader discussed public ritual and spiritual leadership in times of civil unrest. Leaders were able to reflect on the immigration executive orders were affecting different faith communities and discuss how we could be supportive of one another.

In March our Synod was represented at the “Stand Against Hate” at Independence Mall organized by the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia as we expressed solidarity, in light of the deplorable vandalism of the Mt. Carmel cemetery.

On April 24th, religious leaders gathered together at the Beth Shalom Congregation for the spring meeting of the Religious Leaders Council as we engaged about the “Theology of Solidarity” and had the opportunity to share stories, texts, and teaching from each of our traditions that related to being an “ally” to another group’s pursuit of justice. Rabbi David Glanzberg-Krainin of Beth Shalom led a tour of the congregation’s unique Frank Lloyd Wright designed sanctuary.

During the October meeting of the Religious Leaders Council we gathered at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies and heard a word of welcome from President Bokin Kim of the Won Institute. Our time together focused on race and faith with a presentation by The Rev. Steven B. Lawrence, a co-minister at White Rock Baptist, Adjunct Professor at Palmer Theological Seminary, and the President of NewCore. NewCore is a multi-racial, interfaith body that believes people to take control of their narratives and teach others through the act of storytelling.

I am humbled by the public witness that our Synod is playing in the Council and as leaders in our city in making interfaith work a priority. Members of the ELCA and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod can be proud the work our Synod is doing to make our city a better place for all to live, work, and play. To learn more about the Religious Leaders Council or the Interfaith Center please check out <http://www.interfaithcenterpa.org/>.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Fritz E. Fowler
Pastor, University Lutheran Church
pastor@uniluphila.org

Zones of Peace: **Advancing Exemplary Peace-Making in Greater Philadelphia**

The thirty-two senior leaders from diverse religious traditions who make up the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia pray for an end to violence, envisioning a region that is free from fear, filled with respect, and marked by deeds of kindness. To this end, they launched the *Zones of Peace* initiative in 2009. Since then, 70 congregations and grass roots organizations, museums, a government agency, and even a barber shop, have been honored for creative efforts to address the root causes of violence. Though impossible to calculate precisely, the cumulative effort of tens of thousands of individuals associated with organizations recognized by *Zones of Peace* has surely reduced violence in our city and surrounding areas. More organizations deserve to be recognized! To see the current list of *Zones of Peace* honorees and nominate another, go to: <https://www.interfaithcenterpa.org/zones-of-peace>

During her tenure as Bishop of the SEPA Synod of the ELCA, Bishop Claire Burkat has been a strong advocate for *Zones of Peace*, and a co-convenor of the Religious Leaders Council. The other co-convenors are Rabbi David Straus, Imam Anwar Muhaimin, and Archbishop Charles Chaput. Bishop Burkat has recognized that it is necessary for people of diverse faith traditions to emphasize their common commitments to peace, justice, and mutual respect while respecting the differences that divide them. She sees the *Zones of Peace* initiative as one way the faith community can express its gratitude to those who work in the neighborhoods and towns of our region to stem the tide of violence. She has endorsed the process of recognizing *Zones of Peace* (interviewing, vetting, and honoring with the presentation of a banner), and rejoiced when SEPA congregations have been honored. So far, those named as *Zones of Peace* are:

- Grace, Wyndmoor
- Prince of Peace, Lawncrest
- Saint John's, Ambler
- Saint John's, Melrose Park
- Turning Point Center for Youth and Young Adults (Redemption, Rhawnhurst)
- University Lutheran Church
- Upper Dublin, Ambler

In addition, several organizations with whom SEPA congregations are affiliated have been honored as *Zones of Peace*: e.g. Mitzvah Circle Foundation, Heeding God's Call, Interfaith Housing Alliance (Montgomery County), The Interfaith Walk for Peace and Reconciliation, and Walking the Walk (a program of the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia.)

Rev. John B. Hougen, PhD
Coordinator, Zones of Peace

Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia President's Letter to Synod Assemblies

One day last year I came home from church and I noticed that the sermon I had written and printed out the night before was sitting in a different place than I had left it that morning. The pages were bent and crinkled up. And then, as I looked closer, I realized that three pages of my sermon were actually missing. It turned out that my puppy had eaten them! Like the proverbial story of the dog eating a child's homework, my dog had eaten MY homework! My wife joked that either our dog thought the sermon was so good that he wanted to take it all in, or that it was so bad that he was giving me a hint that I should rewrite it. Of course, I was able to print out another copy of the pages that my dog had consumed. But even more, that experience provided me with the opportunity for something else. It gave me the chance to look a little closer at what I had planned to preach the next Sunday. And as I looked at it, I thought maybe I would tweak it a bit. So it was that my dog's snack provided me an opportunity to look at my upcoming Sunday sermon in a different light.

What happens when a dog eats a pastor's sermon? The pastor is given an opportunity to rethink it and possibly rework it.

Thank goodness, we do not have dogs that threaten our archival collection at the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia! Temperature, sunlight, and humidity are the usual culprits that can harm an archive. Your regional Archives Center is a state of the art facility that helps protect and preserve the archival treasures of northeastern Lutheranism for future generations.

The Board and the Staff of the Archives Center are also presented with opportunities to reflect on our work and to sometimes rethink how we do things. Over the last 40 years we have been blessed to have a Curator, John Peterson, who has been with us from the very beginning of our joint work. As John's retirement approaches in 2019, the Board has decided to hire a new Executive Director, Lisa Minardi, who will begin work later this summer. We at the Archives Center are thankful for our past and our present, as we are also looking towards the future.

We continue to rely on Synodical support and funding from closed congregations (\$5000 from each closed parish whose records we receive), as well as from the United Lutheran Seminary and other agencies and organizations whose archives we hold. We furthermore are grateful for contributions from a variety of supporters (all of which are gratefully accepted).

Please continue to support the work of your regional Archives Center with your prayers and contributions.

Make sure to pick up copies of the Archives newsletter, the *Archives Advocate*, and say “hi” to your Synod Archivist! Finally, visitors are always welcome at the Archives Center!

Wishing you blessings on your Synod Assembly!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Francis Watson".

The Rev. J. Francis Watson, Ph.D.
President of the Board, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia