

# Wayfarer

STORIES FROM THE ROAD.

LET  
everything  
THAT  
BREATHES  
praise THE Lord!  
PSALM 150:6

*In this issue...*

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**SOUTHWESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA  
SYNOD**  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN AMERICA

## MISSION:

TO SERVE, CONNECT,  
AND EQUIP ELCA  
CONGREGATIONS  
IN SOUTHWESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA TO TELL  
THE STORY OF JESUS

**“Whatever your task, work  
heartily, as serving the  
Lord...”**

*Colossians 3:23*

Cover

Calligraphy by Pastor Kerri Clark  
Photo from Canva

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Image: Public Domain

## NURTURING FAITH IN ISOLATION



### Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow

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### The Commemoration of Dag Hammarskjöld, Renewer of Society, September 18

Suppose enough time has passed that the name of Dag Hammarskjöld is not as generally familiar now as it was in the first two or three decades after his untimely death. In the 1950s the Swedish diplomat was known globally for his extraordinary service as Secretary-General of the United Nations. What came as a surprise to the world was his deep faith in God, which was revealed in the publication of his journal in 1963, not long after a plane crash in the Congo took his life and ended his career.

In his bedside table this undated letter was found, addressed to the Swedish Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Leif Belfrage:

*Dear Leif:*

*Perhaps you may remember I once told you that, in spite of everything, I kept a diary which I wanted you to take charge of someday.*

*Here it is.*

*It was begun without a thought of anybody else reading it. But, what with my later history and all that has been said and written about me, the situation has changed. These entries provide the only true "profile" that can be drawn. That is why, during recent years, I have reckoned with the possibility of publication, though I have continued to write for myself, not for the public.*

*If you find them worth publishing, you have my permission to do so—as a sort of white book concerning my negotiations with myself—and with God.*

*Dag*

The book was called *Markings*, and it revealed to the world a side of the storied global servant of peace that had not generally been known—ongoing “negotiations” with himself and with God. About what, exactly? About the deepest things people contemplate: Who are we? And what are we about as human beings on this earth and in community with each other? We recognize this “negotiation” as the journey of faith.

**You may experience a certain isolation in your own faith journey these days. It may be that, like Dag Hammarskjöld, you have a secular job that requires tremendous restraint in displays of personal faith.**

But even within the church our polarized society can leave us feeling alone. Many of our congregation members and rostered ministers have shared with me how they feel isolated from each other in these trying times, even out-of-step with their own church. The commemoration of Dag Hammarskjöld this fall gives us an opportunity to learn how to nurture faith in times of isolation.

Listen in the journal entry below for how Dag Hammarskjöld contemplates his own identity, his own understanding of self.

“At every moment you choose yourself. But do you choose your self? Body and soul contain a thousand possibilities out of which you can build many 'I's. But in only one of them is there a congruence of the elector and the elected. Only one—which you will never find until you have excluded all those superficial and fleeting possibilities of being and doing with which you toy, out of curiosity or wonder or greed, and which hinder you from casting anchor in the experience of the

mystery of life, and the consciousness of the talent entrusted to you which is your I.”  
*(Dag Hammarskjöld, Markings)*

He finds his true self in that resonance between his creator (elector) and his own life experience or vocation (the elected). He hints at the biblical story of the talents entrusted in different measure. And in reflecting on his own negotiations around these faith narratives, he learns to identify an authentic way of living his faith in the world.

Dag Hammarskjöld can be a pioneer and companion on our own journey of personal discovery within the context of Christian faith. For our identity is not to be found in the complacency of standing idle among a community of people who are all alike. But rather, it is revealed in our own “negotiations” within places of challenge and difference, even isolation.

With you in Christ, 

## 2022 SYNOD ASSEMBLY RECAP

The following actions were taken by our Synod Assembly in June 2022:

- Adopted a Memorial directing the Synod Council to form a Domestic Violence Task Force to work with the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network.
- Adopted a Memorial to request the 2022 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church that shall reconsider the Statements of Purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the Principles of Organization, and all matters pertaining thereunto.
- Adopted a Memorial to request the Churchwide Assembly to direct the Committee on Appeals to establish a fair, transparent, and uniform process for the investigation of misconduct of officers, rostered ministers (including bishops), congregations, and members of congregations.
- Adopted a Memorial calling for the Synod to create a minimum of two “seed planting” missions where ELCA congregations have closed or have never existed.
- Adopted a Resolution which calls on congregations to consider giving building(s) and land no longer in use to the descendants of those peoples, races, or nations that first lived on that land. (More detail on page 10.)

SEE A FULL LIST OF ACTIONS AT: [SWPASYNOD.ORG/ASSEMBLY2022](https://swpasynod.org/assembly2022)



## GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.



### Pastor Jennifer McCurry

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**G**rowing out of our synod's ecumenical work with the Western Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, this fall brings a renewed invitation for your Lutheran congregation or ministry site to partner with others in an ecumenical mission and witness to your community. Meaningful relationships can happen person-to-person, congregation-to-congregation, and even denomination-to-denomination. Ecumenical partnerships flourish when the judicatory level (synod and conference) can support, connect, and equip local ministry sites to live into relationship with one another.

Our intentional discernment with local Methodist Conference leaders led us to recognize our shared commitment to serve and care for our neighbors, both in intentional, ongoing relationships and in discrete acts of service.

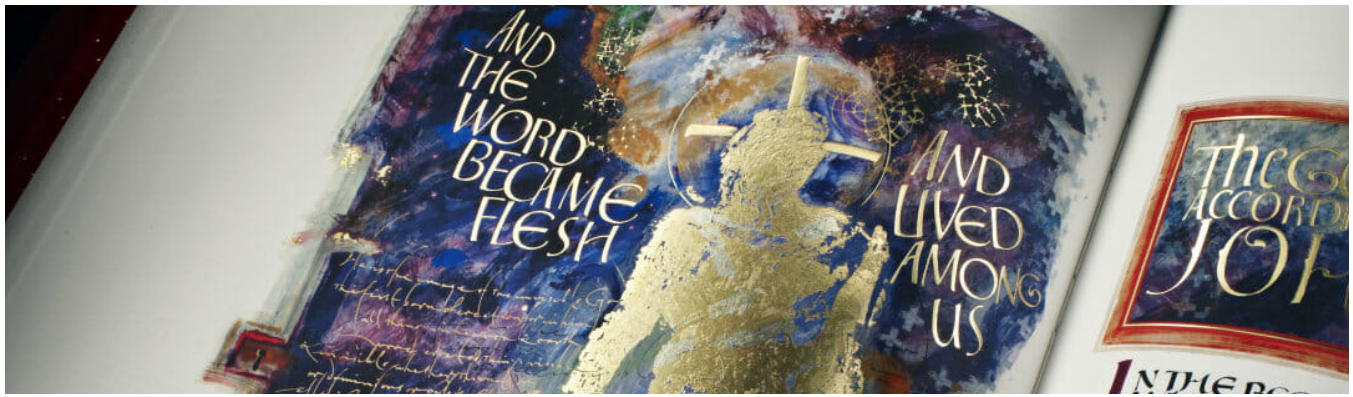
**In a desire to grow together in Christ, we are extending the ELCA's fall "God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday to become an ecumenical ministry both with and to our neighbors. This year, we suggest that you consider inviting the Methodist congregation(s) in your town or neighborhood to partner with you.**

Our ELCA materials describe "God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday as a way to embody that all our Lutheran congregations are "one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor." It seems especially fitting for us to intentionally invite Methodist Christians, one of the ELCA's full communion partners, to

partner with us in our service and love for our neighbors. Whether or not your congregation has participated in this local mission opportunity in the past, this is one way that we, as the collected, synodical expression of our Lutheran church, can join together in mission and ministry with Methodist Christians.

This Sunday mission to our communities can occur on the scheduled date, September 11, or another date in the fall season. Your congregation's members will experience it differently to serve alongside Methodist neighbors, establishing new relationships or deepening established ones. Learn more at: [swpasynod.org/ourhands](http://swpasynod.org/ourhands).

As you consider your congregation's plans for the fall, I commend finding a way to honor our commitment to service through "God's Work, Our Hands." Sunday in partnership with our Methodist siblings in Christ. 💧



John Frontispiece, *Word Made Flesh (Detail)*, Donald Jackson, © 2002 The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

## ARTISTIC PATHWAYS TO PRAYER



### Deacon Beth Caywood

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In our chaotic world where we often feel pulled in so many directions, we sometimes struggle with our prayer life. We yearn for a deep connection with God yet may find it difficult to hear that still, small voice we long to hear whisper to us. I would like to walk us through some possible options employing the visual arts for when we're feeling that disconnect.

When you consider a visual art form, religious icons may come to mind. These sacred images used in religious devotion have been utilized for many centuries primarily in Eastern Orthodox religion, but we, too, have discovered the value of this rich art form in our devotional lives. Many of our congregations offer Taizé worship where icons are especially helpful in creating *visio divina* or "divine seeing." As we meditate on God's word, an image may become our focus through which to encounter God. Our pastors and deacons recently experienced this form of meditation during one of our Monthly Ministerium gatherings. Pastor/artist Lauren Wright Pittman, using her artwork, guided us through a beautiful and meditative form of stations of the cross. For more information about her work visit [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org).

The meditative steps in the creation of an icon is known as icon writing. Have you ever considered the possibility of writing your own icon? This process was shared recently by iconographers at Mount Saint Macrina House of Prayer, a Byzantine Catholic retreat



Archangel Gabriel, Pastor Kim Rapczak

center in Uniontown, PA. The Rev. Kimberly Rapczak participated in this retreat, learned the practice, and created her very own icon. She describes how contemplative and meditative the painting itself was—every stroke is a prayer. Indeed, those who professionally engage in the writing of icons are praying as they create. Pastor Kim highly recommends touring Mount Saint Macrina to see the icons in the monastery chapel. She has expanded her appreciation of religious icons to less traditional icon writers, such as

Kelly Latimore and Brother Robert Lentz, who seek to expand the language of iconography through using less familiar and more current figures who also bear witness to God.

A most beautiful undertaking took place a number of years ago. The Minnesota Marine Art Museum notes that a “team of artists coordinated by Donald Jackson in Wales and a team of scholars in Central Minnesota brought together the ancient techniques of calligraphy and illumination with an ecumenical Christian approach to the Bible rooted in Benedictine spirituality. The result is a living document and a monumental achievement.” I’m referring to the exquisite Saint John’s Bible.

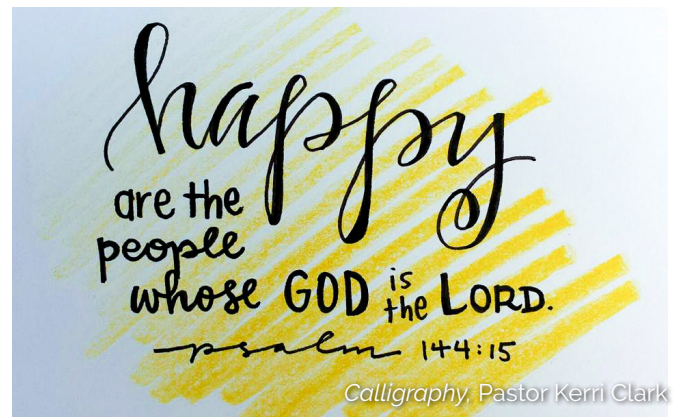


*Luke Frontispiece, Birth of Christ (Detail), Donald Jackson, © 2002 The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Used with permission. All rights reserved.*

Donald Jackson is one of the world's foremost Western calligraphers, and scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This Bible and true work of art is especially meaningful to me. My early studies were at Ivy School of Professional Art where I was trained in Calligraphy & Design and had the opportunity to take a calligraphy workshop at Carnegie Mellon with Donald Jackson. As a true adoring fan, I of course asked him to autograph my copy of his book, *The Story of Writing*. It's one of my most treasured books with a unique autograph using several pens at one time. If you wish to engage this hand-written and hand-illuminated bible for the purpose of prayer, I enthusiastically

recommend the reproductions that are divided into a number of user-friendly volumes. For more information on the Saint John's Bible visit [saintjohnsbible.org](http://saintjohnsbible.org) and/or stop in at the synod office to see Bishop Kusserow's collection of these reproductions. Gather additional information in the resource center about this and other beautiful pieces of artwork suitable for individual reflection.

Just as we see icon writing is available for us to encounter, so indeed is the written word. Another one of our pastors, the Rev. Kerri Clark, has done just that. Several years ago, the Resource Center promoted the book, *Praying in Color* by Sybil MacBeth. If you consider yourself a visual learner, feel restless and distracted in your devotional time, or simply love color, this series is for you. The author walks readers through the many ways to pray in color. No artistic talent needed at all! Pastor Kerri, a self-described doodler, began to experiment with what she learned in this book from crayons to markers and more. She eventually tried her hand with pointed pen calligraphy, which uses a pointed pen versus a pen with a flat nib dipped in ink. Through practice with this technique and her innate creativity she prayed through the *Psalms*—all 150 of them! Her creations can be found on Facebook #psalmsincolor. Pastor Kerri chose this ambitious project feeling the *Psalms* connects us to our liturgy and to one another. She has continued to create many beautiful pieces of artwork springing from this time in prayer.



*Calligraphy, Pastor Kerri Clark*

As Pastors Kim and Kerri both remind us, the tools are less important than the practice. Pull out that box of Crayolas and pray! 💧



## SOLUTIONS IN CONSTITUTIONS



**Brandon James**

*Member of Oak Grove Lutheran Church & Synod Constitutions & Bylaw Committee*

**S**everal years ago, my daughter gave me a t-shirt that says, "I love meetings." Over the years, two important meetings I have been attending are Oak Grove Lutheran Church council and the synod council. In the positions I have held on those bodies, I have been exposed to the problems of congregational constitutions.

One problem recently emerged when a congregation wanted to transact business but could not produce a quorum because their constitution gives a specific number of members needed and they no longer have that many members.

Every three years, the ELCA holds its Churchwide Assembly. One item of business is amendments to the national constitution as well as the one for congregations. Many congregations have not seen the necessity of going through the process of updating their document. I have been involved several times in revising the Oak Grove constitution. I also currently serve on the synod constitutions and bylaw committee.

**The process to update a congregation's constitution is not hard but does require some close attention. The synod committee makes it easier by producing a sample revised edition of the model constitution. This year is the year for the Churchwide Assembly and sometime this fall, our version from the committee will be available.**

The ELCA model constitution has 20 chapters. Some are required exactly as printed, some give options, and some allow the congregation to write what is needed for their particular ministry setting. The process for the triennial revisions begins with a group in each congregation matching up the new model constitution with their constitution. Where there are required changes, simply cut-and-paste. The group may also propose changes in the non-required sections. Once the process is completed, the revised constitution, any continuing resolutions and the bylaws are sent to the synod constitutions and bylaw committee. A member of the committee repeats the process of a word for word review, reviews the continuing resolutions and sends a response that the congregation can take official action to adopt the changes. It sounds tedious but is worth the effort when problems occur. My council referred to our constitution last meeting because our pastor left and we needed to be sure whether a pastor was required for a quorum for a meeting. Good luck in keeping up with the times! 💧





Image: Statue of St. Francis of Assisi in the courtyard of the Old North Church in Boston, by MK Feeney, Wikimedia Commons

## MAKE US INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE



### Pastor Joseph Murdy, OLF

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**O**n Tuesday, October 4th the church commemorates the life and ministry of Saint Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church. Francis is known for many things, not least of which is his love and care for creation. His life is a model of discipleship that demonstrates self-denial, kindness and Christ-like love for those for whom the world often casts aside. Francis continues to be a universal saint loved and admired across denominations and religions around the world.

800 years later, *Il Poverello*, (the Little Poor Man of Assisi) is still teaching the church through examples of love and gospel centered living. But, what can someone who used to wear rags and beg for food possibly teach us today?

**I believe that in the tumultuous and divisive times in which we live, Francis can teach us how to model and be a source of peace.**

Francis personified such peace when he met with the Sultan of Egypt, Malek al-Kamil in 1219. The world was at war. The crusades—not a pretty part of our history—were in full swing. Prior to his arrival, the sultan declared that anyone who delivered him the head of a Christian would be rewarded in gold. Yet, in the face of death, Francis stepped forward.

The story is cinematic to say the least. However, it wasn't his readiness for martyrdom that we remember. It was what Francis said that is worth his weight in gold.

When he encountered the Sultan, he simply said, "May the Lord give you peace."

These words not only surprised the Sultan, they gave the world a different perspective in a time of war and bloodshed. It was Francis' courage and enthusiasm for the gospel which demonstrated a vision of God's peace.

As a pastor serving the church, and as an army chaplain serving people in uniform, I know all too well the desire for peace which we all share as a global community. As we commemorate the life and legacy of Francis, may we model the peace of Christ he sought. May we speak peace to those times and people with which we struggle. May we be bold to surprise the world with the peace that comes from knowing Christ. 💧

*The Order of Lutheran Franciscans is a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community of the Gulf Coast Synod, ELCA.*  
[lutheranfranciscans.org](http://lutheranfranciscans.org)

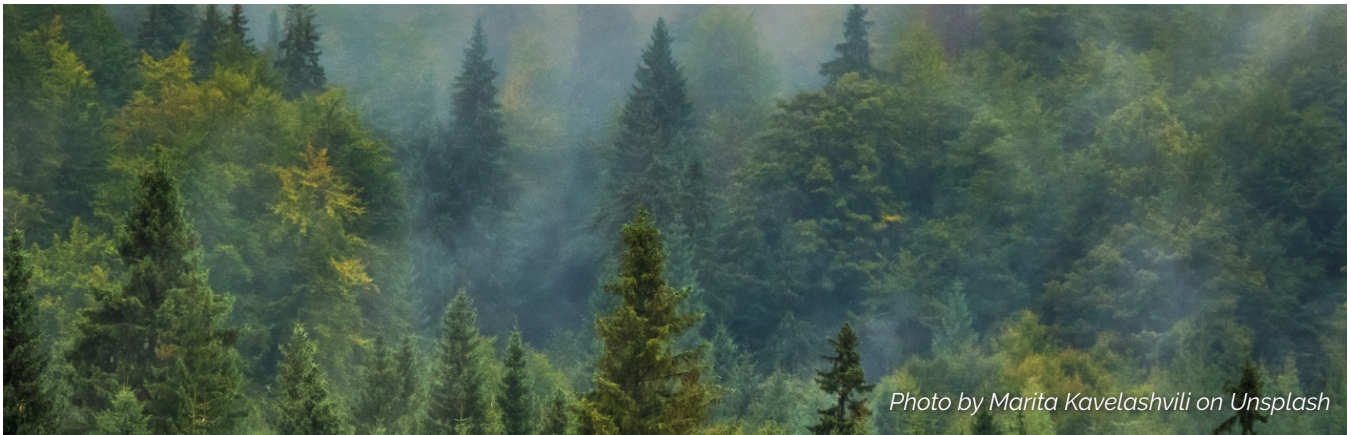


Photo by Marita Kavelashvili on Unsplash

## ACKNOWLEDGING LAND AND A PEOPLE



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**W**hen I first put the address in my GPS this past May, Apple Maps tried to send me elsewhere. It took some time to convince Siri that I did indeed want to drive to Charles Street near Blawnox, and that the address did, in fact, exist. Even arguing silently with a computer seemed to be illustrative of an unintentional continuation of the way our American culture has sought to erase a people.

The Council of the Three Rivers American Indian Center (COTRAIC) in Dorseyville, while not a reservation or a historically designated home for a tribe, became a community center in the late 1970s when the federal government auctioned off the remaining cold war defense missile sites in the US. While there is still evidence of its initial use on site, with the massive guard tower still standing in the distance, it has now become a place that many people of numerous backgrounds have found a place of invitation and welcome.

Which was also my experience when Bishop Kusserow and I arrived to meet with Miguel Sague, Jr., one of the elders of the community who serves on the board of the center. As we sat in chairs outside, so we could remove our masks and see one another's faces as we spoke, Miguel (as he invited us to call him) immediately created a space of welcome and grace as he shared stories of the people who once called this place home and those who find home there now.

As Miguel spoke to us of the ways the center has expanded and welcomed so many who seek affirmation of their identity and history, others passing by our conversation would add bits of information or confirm a detail, all adding to the affirmation that we were welcome in this place.

After we had listened to many stories, Bishop Kusserow offered to Miguel the document from our 2016 Churchwide Assembly in which our church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery. This statement of repentance to native nations in this country for the damage done in the name of Christianity, while only a first step in healing, is an important one. Miguel received it on behalf of the board and received our verbal commitment to work towards justice with our Native siblings.

**The land acknowledgement shared at the beginning of the Synod Assembly in June, written in partnership with Miguel, is another step, naming the people that history has sought to erase:**

*"As we gather as the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA, we acknowledge and honor the Indigenous peoples who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.*

*The congregations of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod occupy the ancestral land of the Seneca Nation whose territory stretched from Niagara Falls to Washington County and from Cleveland to Harrisburg. The Seneca were part of the Five Nation Iroquois Confederacy, which included the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas, and Mohawks. Later, the Lenape, or Delaware, and the Shawnee were welcomed by the confederacy after being displaced by British colonists.*

*We respect the rich history and ongoing relationship Native peoples have with this land and the many contributions Indigenous peoples continue to gift this place. As we consider our place in the story of colonization and of undoing its legacy, consider ways you can give of your time and energy to seek out information, to learn more, to do more, and to remain faithful to our shared journeys toward truth and healing."*

As we continue in relationship with the Council of the Three Rivers and other Native communities in our country, the SWPA Synod will offer opportunities for education and learning in the coming year to facilitate this relationship as we seek to accompany our Native siblings and support their autonomy.

**One of the ways you can begin this work is to form a land acknowledgement for your own congregation or organization. Resources for this can be found on our synod website, including the *Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery* and resources for study: [swpasynod.org/ministries/diversity](https://swpasynod.org/ministries/diversity).**

As we closed our conversation, Miguel extended an invitation to us to join them for the upcoming Pow Wow in September at the

American Indian Center. More information can be found on their website, [cotraic.org/events](https://cotraic.org/events). This annual event is open to all, and people gather from across the region to enjoy music, ceremonial dancing, and good food. These are things we have come to appreciate and celebrate in our own congregations; what a gift to be invited to expand our understanding of faith and tradition.

As we departed, Bishop Kusserow committed our church to being in relationship with the Council as we work to educate ourselves on the history of colonialism and racism that harmed so many people. It was just another step in a process towards reconciliation, but each step is an affirmation of life and of the healing power of the gospel. 💧

## **A JUBILEE RETURN OF THE LAND TO THOSE WHO BELONG TO THE LAND**

The 2022 Synod Assembly passed a resolution furthering our synod's commitment to anti-racist actions and mending harms, brought by Pastor James West:

"...RESOLVED that in our Synod, ELCA Congregations and Agencies, when their facilities no longer support their reason for existence, consider giving the building(s) and land to the descendants of those peoples, races, or nations that first lived on that land.

RESOLVED that Congregations and Agencies, even in their prime, as well as in their sunset years, build relationships with congregations, faith communities, and agencies that trace their ancestry to indigenous populations and people who came to this land against their free will as slaves.

RESOLVED that our Synod memorialize the ELCA at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly to consider doing likewise."

*Summary of all 2022 Actions on page 3.*



#tomcatstrong



## THIEL COLLEGE RENOVATIONS



**Mark S. Batt**

*Director of Advancement & Class of 1987*  
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**G**reetings from Thiel College! I hope everyone has had a chance to enjoy the summer months. This time of year Thiel's campus is very busy. It has been a very active summer with graduate programs in full swing and several construction projects underway. The return of our undergraduate student body in the fall always provides for a vibrant campus full of activity. Enrollment numbers are trending in the right direction and we are excited for the future of Thiel College.

Currently, we are concluding a \$2.1 million renovation to our athletic spaces. Recently, we have added five graduate-level programs to our expanding curriculum. They are: Speech Language Pathology, Physician Assistant, Master of Business Administration, Master of Communication and Leadership and Master in Clinical and Mental Health Counseling. We are incredibly proud of our postgraduate programs and our students who occupy those seats. As mentioned, our undergraduate enrollment continues to increase also making for an exciting time in the Thiel community.

During the spring of 2023, we will begin an extensive renovation of the Academic Center. A gift of \$4 million will support this renovation and the building is to be renamed the Daniel and Dorothy Spence Academic Center. We are excited for these upgrades and

improvements to both our curriculum and the physical plant of our college. The future of Thiel College is bright and strong. All of these advancements will be transformative for Thiel College and more directly for our students.

**This is all possible with the support of our campus community and those that are associated near and far who advocate for our mission.** We have not, and cannot, sustain without the support and blessings that we receive from others and our Lord Jesus Christ. Thiel will continue its mission, that is shaped in its Lutheran heritage, that provides an inclusive learning environment and serves a diverse population of students.

Have a wonderful fall season and always feel free to stop by campus for a visit! Please contact me if I may be of service to you. 💧



## BIG DREAMS IN THE ALLEGHENY VALLEY



**Pastor Peter D. Asplin**

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Congregations and members of the ELCA have, for decades, responded to the problem of hunger with compassion and financial commitment. Out of the giving of individuals, congregations, and synods, the ELCA seeks to provide not just food for the hungry and water for the thirsty, but sustainable solutions that address the reality of hunger.

**Beginning in 2019, the ELCA created the Big Dream grant program to “support ministries that are building and designing innovative and lasting solutions to hunger, poverty, and economic inequality.” The Allegheny Valley Association of Churches (AVAoC) is one of twelve ministries across the country that have been awarded Big Dream grants 2022, totaling \$1,432,144.**

AVAoC has been fighting hunger and homelessness in the Freeport and Natrona Heights areas since the 1950s. One program, known nationwide as “Family Promise,” has provided shelter, social support, meals, and hospitality to homeless families, particularly families with children who need to be housed together. Beginning in 1993, the 56 congregations of the AVAoC would host families overnight in church buildings for a week, including nightly dinners, play time, book reading, and getting to know the guests.

With the outbreak of COVID, that program came to a halt, but another path forward has been developed. AVAoC has purchased and equipped a former nursing home to serve as a permanent shelter for families. One of the gifts of their ministry is that even larger families can be accommodated this way! The Big Dream grant went a long way to helping equip this ministry for families. But key to success going forward will be the members of congregations like Trinity, Freeport, and Faith, Natrona Heights, who volunteer their time and their skills. Karen Snair, Executive Director of AVAoC says: “Bringing folks that have resources together with folks that don’t have resources has always been a key. Volunteers provide a comfort and a different base of experience and hope and help.”

Together the people and congregations of AVAoC and the ELCA are working to make Big Dreams take root in our communities here in western Pennsylvania! 💧



Lisa Levine (left) & Christine Weller (right)

## LATROBE TO UKRAINE



### Christine Weller

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**T**he Health and Wellness Ministry of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latrobe connects people with services and with each other. Our ministry has the vision of serving our Latrobe community and beyond.

Lisa Levine decided very early in the start of this ministry that she wanted to be a part of what we were doing. She came weekly to help. She never arrived empty handed. Donations of clothes, toiletries, food, pet needs, etc., would fill her truck. Together we would do "small things with great love!" (This is her favorite saying, one she adopted from Mother Teresa.) Lisa was shocked by the number of people we were able to feed, clothe, visit, and network with. She traveled with me regularly on my ministry tasks. She listened as my phone rang in her presence, with the requests of those in need of a listening ear. Lisa was, and is, thrilled to see our community responding to, and living out, the words in Mathew 25:35-36: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Lisa was then given the opportunity to be with her husband who is stationed in Germany. She was torn, because she wanted to continue to

be a part of our Health and Wellness Ministry. She barely had her suitcases unpacked before she was on Facetime with me asking how she could help from afar. She started a card ministry and created a prayer corner in her home. Her handmade cards have, to this date, totaled over 2,000. Her prayers for others are endless.

I remember the day I received her call about the war in Ukraine. "What can I do?" she asked. She found herself finding places of collections for the refugees of the war. People local to her in Germany were traveling to their relatives in the surrounding countries, such as Poland, with collected items. Lisa has support from our local community as well. Many send her money and supplies enabling her to continue to do "small things with great love" .....now in Germany and beyond.

One never knows how the seeds of ministry will be planted and connected. Imagine how far a health and wellness ministry in your own congregation could reach! The love of Jesus knows no boundaries. 💧

# Colleague Connections

*These listings are complete to the best of the knowledge of the synod staff. If you feel there has been an omission, please contact Sandy DeLorenze at [sandy.delorenze@swpasynod.org](mailto:sandy.delorenze@swpasynod.org) or 412-367-8222.*

## Ordination Anniversaries:

### August-October

5 Years: Pastor Amy Michelson  
30 Years: Pastor Deborah Byrum  
35 Years: Pastor Elizabeth Mayforth-Pudimat  
55 Years: Pastor Dennis Orsen  
Pastor Ronald Rademacher

## Ordinations:

### Pastor Kathryn (Katie) McNeal

April 24 at Our Redeemer, McMurray

### Pastor Tricia Christman

May 29 at Oak Grove, Zelienople  
Transferred to Northwest Intermountain Synod with husband, Pastor Nathaneil Christman

## Installations:

### Pastor Margarethe Galbraith-Cordes

Pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Beaver (Brighton Township), and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Beaver, May 1

### Pastor Gregg Knepp

Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh (Brookline), June 5

### Pastor Beth Clementson

Associate Pastor of St. John's of Highland Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh (North Hills), June 12

### Rev. Dr. Alexander Sumo

Pastor of Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries, July 30

## Welcome:

### Pastors Kevin and Martha Clementson

From Delaware-Maryland Synod

### Pastor William Moser

From New Jersey Synod

### Pastor James Roth

From Lower Susquehanna Synod

## Marriage:

Pastors Martha McCreight and David Hanssen were married on May 28

## Churchwide Assembly Representatives:

Pastor Kerri Clark  
Pastor Beth Clementson  
Pastor Brenda Henry  
Tom Hough  
Bishop Kurt Kusserow  
Dennis Lane  
Pastor Tara Lynn  
Pastor Martha McCreight  
Pastor Jennifer McCurry  
DaMisha McFarland-Pollock  
Kyle Neumann  
Sophia Rau  
Andrew Sabol  
Holly Schmitt  
Melanie Thomas  
Barbara Nugent

## In Memoriam:

### Frances Nagy,

wife of Pastor Louis Nagy,  
February 26, 2022

### Pastor Norman E. Nething,

May 16, 2022

### Dick Albright,

former member of Lutherlyn Board,  
May 25, 2022

### Pastor Roger Nicholson,

May 28, 2022

### Avella L. Lubold,

mother of Pastor Paul Lubold,  
June 24, 2022

### Patricia Stabe,

mother of Pastor Matthew Stabe,  
July 12, 2022

## Prayer Requests:

Pastor Allyn Itterly, Ray Dittenhafer,  
Linda Asplin, Jamie McPoyle,  
Pastor Tom Moog

View the most up-to-date list at:  
[swpasynod.org/prayer](http://swpasynod.org/prayer)

# SYNOD STAFF PRESENCE | APR-JUN 22

Whether in the joy of celebrating milestones, the uncertainty of pastoral transitions, or the trauma of congregational crises, the synod supports members during the biggest changes and needs. **Bishop Kusserow and assistants, Pastors Asplin and Stoller, have been present with the following congregations during in-person and online visits to ministers, lay leaders, and councils:**

Around the River  
Lutheran Parish  
Berkeley Hills, North Hills  
Bethesda, Lower Burrell  
Camp Agape, Hickory  
Christ, Millvale  
Christ's, Murrysville  
Community 341, Brookline  
Emmanuel, Prospect  
Faith, Natrona Heights  
Faith, White Oak  
First, Downtown  
Forks-Zion, Leechburg  
Good Shepherd, Bower Hill

Good Shepherd,  
Greensburg  
Good Shepherd,  
Mount Pleasant  
Good Shepherd,  
New Castle  
Harrold-Zion, Greensburg  
Holy Trinity, Irwin  
Jacobs, Masontown  
Lutherlyn, Prospect  
Oak Grove, Zelienople  
Paintertown, Irwin  
Peace, Greenock  
Sewickley Ministerium,  
Sewickley

Spring Church, Apollo  
St. Andrew, Shadyside  
St. John of Highland,  
North Hills  
St. John, Connoquenessing  
St. John, North Versailles  
St. Luke's, Youngwood  
St. Mark's, Brookline  
St. Matthew, Crafton  
St. Paul, Carmichaels  
St. Paul, Sewickley  
Trinity, Avalon  
Trinity, Freeport

*August*

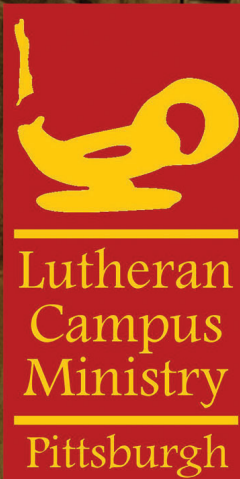




# Calendar of Causes

## SPOTLIGHT ON SOCIAL MINISTRY PARTNERS

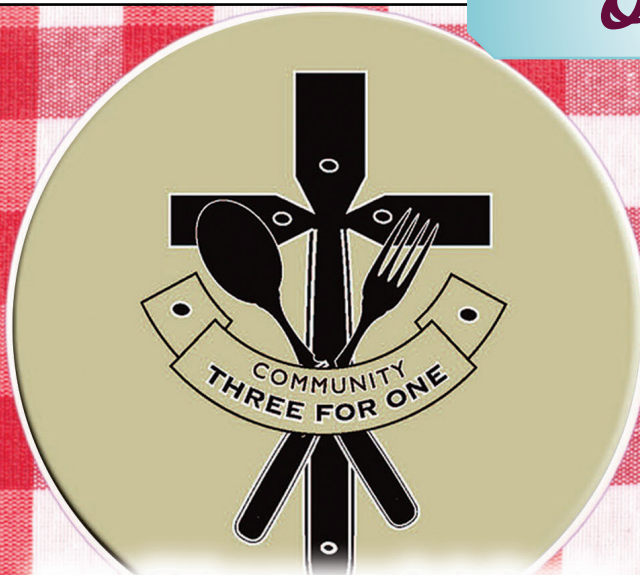
*September*



Lutheran Campus Ministry provides opportunities for fellowship, service, worship and education at Pitt, CMU, Chatham and Carlow universities. All of these opportunities seek to deepen relationships with God and neighbor.

**LUCPGH.COM**

*October*



A worshipping community in the city neighborhood of Brookline. Hearing the call of Christ to feed His sheep.

**COMMUNITYTHREE4ONE.ORG**



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SYNOD** EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN AMERICA

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MORE STORIES & CONNECTIONS:  
[facebook.com/swpasynod](https://facebook.com/swpasynod)

## *Devotional*: REFORMATION & IDENTITY



### **DaMisha McFarland-Pollock**

*Vicar at Sunrise Lutheran Parish, Cozad, NE  
Wartburg Theological Seminary Class of 2024*

**A**s someone currently attending seminary, I am constantly examining and wrestling with theology: Lutheran theology, theology of the cross, my theology, others' theology, and so on. Our theology is comprised of a complex web of our understanding of the interconnectedness of God and humanity. This interconnectedness runs deeper than our baptism and communion practices. We are connected to both God and each other. We are connected to various communities. We are connected to a multitude of identities. It is so easy to compartmentalize our understanding of God solely through our Lutheran lens. However, I think it's time for another reformation. A reformation of our understanding of what it means to be Lutheran and how that impacts how we view God. Just like Luther wasn't trying to create a new faith tradition, but instead improve and expand the tradition he knew and loved – we too can do the same with our understanding of how we as Lutherans view God.

My understanding of God is shaped not only by Lutheran theology, but also by my small town and rural upbringing, as well as the liberation and womanist lenses through which I experience the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our geographic location, sexuality, occupation, culture, and many other identifiers impact how we as Lutherans understand God. Now that's reformation! How do your identities influence your understanding of God? 💧