



Trinity Together

Trinity Lutheran Church

357 West Main Street
Kutztown, Pennsylvania 19530

June 2022

Transitional Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Dennis Ritter
Director of Youth & Family Ministry: Seth Noggle
Editor/Administrative Assistant: Diane Spohn
Director of Music: Bruce Rohrbach
Tech & Media Specialist: Brandon Wood
Financial Secretary: Mike Sailsbery
Giving Bookkeeper: Lisa Finke

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Mission Statement:

“The mission of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church is to equip God’s people to do God’s work and bring good news to hungry people.”

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday through Friday 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Phone: 610-683-3450
Website: www.trinitykutztown.com

Sunday Worship Service at 9:30 AM
Adult Sunday School at 8:00 AM
Good News Club at 8:30 AM

2022 Church Council Members

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Jeff Collier | Property |
| Joseph Jedwab | Christian Education |
| Mary Neuenschwander | Personnel |
| Dan Raudenbush | Treasurer, Finance and Stewardship |
| Kurt Rohrbach | Vice President, Endowment |
| Michael Sailsbery | Financial Secretary |
| Ann Towne | President, Mission/Service and Fellowship |
| Jean Wagner | Worship Life |
| Alicia Wood | Secretary, Witness/Communication |

From the Pastor...

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful celebration we had on the 15th of May as we gathered for worship and remained for a brunch in honor of 3 servants of God here at Trinity, Bruce Rohrbach, Seth Noggle and Lisa Fink. It caused me to reflect that it has been over 10 years since Trinity went through a long-range planning process that made a significant difference in the life and ministry of our congregation. A process was initiated in late 2019 but it was upended by the pandemic early in 2020. Since then it has sometimes felt to me like our congregation is running on fumes and not the flame of the Holy Spirit.

If my sense is at all correct, there are probably many reasons for it being so, among them COVID-19, the frequency of pastor change in recent years and yet another time of pastoral transition currently. But added to these I would venture a guess is the fact that we have not engaged in a meaningful long-range planning process. When I offered my services in the fall of 2020 to serve as our transitional pastor, it was with the expectation that I would be serving for only a few months. Those few months have turned into nearly a year and a half with additional months remaining before a regularly called pastor will be able to assume the leadership reins here at Trinity.

One of the reasons I sought to move the congregation toward a decision regarding the organ and whether or not to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation is that they were in various ways unfinished business of that long ago planning process, and I believed needed to be brought to some kind of resolution, which they were. The remaining piece of this work is the *Starting a New Chapter* Capital Campaign. It has had a very good beginning and looks to be capable of reaching its goals to pay for our new digital organ and to address in a meaningful way the lack of accessibility our building poses to those who have mobility challenges. All of this begs the question: what's next?

Certainly first and foremost, Trinity needs to be able to call its next pastor. As we've learned so far, this effort will be more challenging than we first thought. But almost as important is our need to again be able to dream and plan for the future into which God is constantly calling us.

Without the leading and the vibrancy of God's Spirit we can do nothing good. All our efforts will come to naught. As our transitional pastor and based upon some of the information from those cottage meetings in late 2019, I will continue to suggest possible opportunities for new ministries. In the process, perhaps some old ministries have run their course and need to be laid to rest so that we can respond to the new things God is doing in our midst. Time will tell, but one thing that I am sure of, Trinity cannot afford to simply sit and wait. So for whatever time we have together, let us venture out in faith knowing that God is leading the way!

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Ritter



Schedule & Volunteers

ASSISTING MINISTERS:

| | | |
|---------|---------|----------------|
| June 5 | 9:30 AM | Joseph Jedwab |
| June 12 | 9:30 AM | Dan Raudenbush |
| June 19 | 9:30 AM | Carolyn Miller |
| June 26 | 9:30 AM | Debbie Ziegler |

LAY READERS:

| | | |
|---------|---------|----------------|
| June 5 | 9:30 AM | Joseph Jedwab |
| June 12 | 9:30 AM | Dan Raudenbush |
| June 19 | 9:30 AM | Carolyn Miller |
| June 26 | 9:30 AM | Debbie Ziegler |

ACOLYTES:

| | | |
|---------|---------|------------------|
| June 5 | 9:30 AM | To be determined |
| June 12 | 9:30 AM | To be determined |
| June 19 | 9:30 AM | To be determined |
| June 26 | 9:30 AM | To be determined |

USHERS/GREETERS:

| | | |
|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| June 5 | 9:30 AM | DeVall family |
| June 12 | 9:30 AM | Sue and Jeff Collier |
| June 19 | 9:30 AM | Alice Kutz and Donna Keglovits |
| June 26 | 9:30 AM | Linda Geiring and Michele Zimmerman |

MONEY COUNTERS: Tina Billig and Nancy and Charles Plushanski

FLOWER CHAIRPERSON: Donna Keglovits

ALTAR COMMITTEE: Linda Geiring and Nancy Konemann

IMPORTANT DATES:

| | |
|---------|---------------------|
| June 5 | Day of Pentecost |
| June 12 | Holy Trinity Sunday |
| June 14 | Flag Day |
| June 19 | Father's Day |
| June 21 | First Day of Summer |

MASKS OPTIONAL

Masks are optional in the church building for those individuals who are vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19.

Committee Meeting Dates...

Meeting Dates for June

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Congregation Council | May 10 at 7:00 PM |
| Worship Life Committee | May 17 at 7:00 PM |

From the Church Office...

The church office hours are Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The office is closed on Mondays.

Deadline for articles for the July/August newsletter is Monday, June 20th.

Upcoming Worship Opportunities..

Graduates Recognition

On Sunday, June 5th, we will honor anyone who has graduated from high school, college, a graduate program or a trade school since July 2021. We hope you are able to join us at the 9:30 AM church service on June 5th so we can wish you Godspeed in your future endeavors.

Folk Festival Worship July 3rd

Our congregation along with St. Paul UCC and the Topton-Bowers Parish will be hosting the worship service at the Kutztown Folk Festival on Sunday, July 3rd at 10:30 AM on the Main Stage. There will be no worship service that morning at Trinity. Our director of music, Bruce Rohrbach, and the Berks Tubadors will provide the music leadership that day. Pastor Ritter is scheduled to preach and all marked offerings will be forwarded to their respective congregations.

We have also been notified that Trinity will receive 50 complimentary tickets for those who wish to attend the worship and stay on the grounds following the service. More details regarding this aspect of the day will follow.

Capital Campaign...



STARTING A NEW CHAPTER

Our Capital Campaign, *Starting a New Chapter*, has entered its second and final phase as a mailing has been sent to members of Trinity who have not yet had an opportunity to make their 3-year pledge to repay the loan received from the Endowment Committee for the purchase of the Allen digital organ and to potentially address some long standing accessibility issues presented by our building. At the conclusion of the first phase a total of 12 pledges committed \$90,600 toward a campaign goal of approximately \$220,000. Members are asked to return their commitment cards for the campaign to the church by Sunday, June 12. Individuals are asked to contact Pr. Ritter with any questions or concerns.

Staff Recognition Celebration a Hit!

May 15th provided a wonderful opportunity to recognize the ministries of three members of Trinity's staff: Bruce Rorhbach, 15 years as Director of Music; Seth Noggle, 10 years as Director of Youth and Family Ministry; and Lisa Finke, retired from serving as Administrator.

The morning began with a service of worship that was well attended with members of the honorees' families and other guests present. The Berks Tubadors along with Diane Spohn at the piano and organ provided the musical leadership. Pr. Ritter's sermon for all ages lifted up the 3 honorees as excellent examples of the love Jesus talked about in the gospel that morning. In his main sermon, Pr. Ritter noted that the church always needs to be open to God's ever-expanding welcome to fellowship in him. The early church struggled to understand this and so does the church today.

A surprising and fun moment occurred in the middle of Pr. Ritter's sermon when Ann Towne, council president, brought greetings from Provence, France, where she, her husband Will and Dan and Karen Raudenbush were vacationing. The service concluded with the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Following worship attendees moved to the fellowship hall where a wonderful brunch, catered by Kathryn's Katering, along with deserts provided by members of the congregation was enjoyed by everyone. Kurt Rohrbach served as a masterful Master of Ceremonies. He skillfully toasted and roasted each of the honorees. Former pastor, Chris deForest, now Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, brought greetings virtually due to being on a family vacation and retired, former pastor, Keith Rohrbach, brought greetings and roasted the honorees in person. Each of the honorees received gifts from the congregation and the warm regards of those in attendance.

The members of the task force that planned the day's events were Ann Towne, Kurt Rohrbach, Debbie Ziegler and Merry Schlegel. Thank you to them and also to administrative assistant Diane Spohn, Melanie Wessner, Marsha Hoyer, and Nancy Hildenbrand.

May 15, 2022 was indeed a day to remember and rejoice. Thanks be to God!

Christian Education...

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School Class welcomes you to join us in enjoying "Partners in a New Creation," a program that invites us to imagine God's vision for the earth and our lives. How can we work in partnership with God's new creation? First, we will look at brokenness in our world. Second, we will see how Christ brings abundant life and healing to sick systems and structures of death. Third, we will examine Revelation's images of hope and new creation through God. Rev. Barbara Rossing, who teaches at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and Ann Hafften, a communications specialist for Lutheran agencies, will help us imagine God's future dawning on earth and how we can trust and live in that vision. Please join us Sundays at 8:00 am in the Parlor for discussion, coffee and fellowship.

Bible Study

Bible Study is on Thursdays at 10:00 AM. You can join the Bible study group in-person or on “Zoom”. To join the group electronically use the Zoom platform. Here’s the Zoom link to click:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84530518506> To dial-in by phone, call this number: 1 301-715-8592. Then, when you are prompted, enter this Meeting ID number: 845 3051 8506. No other password is needed.

Faith in Daily Life Via Zoom

Several followers of my monthly blog have been asking about the possibility of offering a monthly discussion group via Zoom. Each meeting will focus on one blog post, including questions at the end of the post and reactions from the participants. It would be offered through Zoom because, in addition to members of Trinity, there are folks interested from several other states and faith traditions. We are considering a few different meeting times; however, early Sunday evening seems to be getting the most votes. The goal will not be to challenge others in the group but rather to listen carefully and offer understanding and support while identifying opportunities to challenge ourselves in the wide-open arena of faith in daily life.

Check out some of my recent monthly blogs at exploreyourgod.com and if you are interested, please send your contact information to tlieb counseling@gmail.com. We will need to limit the group size in order to create a climate for meaningful discussion.

Blessings,
Terry Lieb

From the Finance Committee...

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Approved 2022 Budget -- | \$323,495 |
| Offerings through April | \$ 76,694 |
| Expenditures through April | \$ 94,197 |
| Balance through April | \$(17,503) |
| Average monthly offering | \$ 17,695 |

* () will indicate a deficit

Worship Life...

The Worship Life Team wants to thank everyone who generously shared their monetary contributions and time to make the staff recognition service on May 15th a huge success. Thank you to the Tubadors, choir members, Diane Spohn for supplying as musician and Bruce for the beautiful organ selection. A special thanks to Pastor Ritter and the committee that organized the event. We want to wish Lisa a Blessed Retirement and look forward to our continued ministry with Seth and Bruce.

Thank you to our technical support team and all their helpers, we really appreciate your time and talent. We are so blessed to offer this service for those worshipping at home.

Oil-filled candles have been ordered from the Memorial Fund to replace the Christ Candle, the altar candles and the candelabra candles. We will no longer be using disposable candles, which cannot be recycled. In the future we may purchase oil-filled candles for the window racks.

Thank you for your generous contributions to the Jingle Offering collected during the Easter season. This money will benefit the Potato Project.

We welcome our new members Rebecca Gilligan and Jessica, Jeremy, Liam and Elijah Miller who joined Trinity on May 1st. We look forward to working with you in our ministries here at Trinity.

An organ dedication service will take place sometime in the Fall as well as a dedicatory organ concert. More information to follow.

Mark your calendars:

June 5—Honor our graduates during the 9:30 worship service.

June 7—Worship Life Team Meeting at 7:00 p.m. (all are welcome)

July 3—Worship at the Folk Festival (more information to follow)

August 28—Summer picnic at Bowers Park

Sponsors needed...

Altar Flowers

There are several Sundays in 2022 that do not have altar flower sponsors. The dates still available are:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| July 17 | July 31 |
| September 4 | September 18 |
| September 25 | October 9 |
| October 16 | November 20 |

If you are interested in sponsoring the flowers for any of these dates please contact Darlene Dietrich at 610-683-7975 or the church office at 610-683-3450.

Upcoming Events...

Vacation Bible School



Come hop aboard the Rocky Railway Express for VBS fun this summer! Our St. Paul's/Trinity Combined VBS Program is back in its normal format and will run August 1-5 from 6:00-8:30 p.m. at St. Paul's UCC (Kutztown). Please plan to register your children and grandchildren (ages 2 thru 6th grade) as soon as possible (for planning purposes) but no later than July 1 (*see registration form in this newsletter or in the back of the church*). We are also looking for adult and older youth helpers. Please contact Louise Moyer at LouiseMoyer13@gmail.com or 610-641-0507 if interested in helping or with questions.

Spring Care Packages

Our Trinity youth enrolled in higher education programs have finished their studies for this school year. Trinity's Mission Committee mailed out 21 Study Care Packages. Congratulations to all. We also mailed out three care packages to our military in honor of Armed Forces Day.

Rita Robertson and Lisa Finke

This is a list of students and their colleges and universities:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Patrick Wise | Medical Resident, University of California-Davis |
| Sydney Sanders | Bloomsburg University |
| Scott Sanders | Penn College of Technology |
| Owen Kulp | University of Pittsburgh |
| The Lutheran Centre-3 | Kutztown University |
| Trevor Shurr | Lehigh-Carbon Community College |
| Emily Bubbenmoyer | Slippery Rock University |
| Sarah Bubbenmoyer | Penn State-Berks |
| Beau deForest | Kutztown University |
| Julia Mace | Kutztown University |
| Evie Mace | Dickenson College |
| Rachel Towne | New York University |
| Dr. Sam Towne | Cornell |
| Ramsi Ross | Kutztown University |
| Anna Owen | Drexel University |
| | College of Medicine |
| Ashley Wentzel | Alvernia |
| Hannah Nicholson | West Chester University |
| Elizabeth Diehl | Cedar Crest College |
| Brody Graft | Marywood University |

Our Military for Armed Forces Day:

Keefe DePue
John Julian
Kristiana Buschan

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following graduates –

Emily Bubbenmoyer – Graduated from Slippery Rock University with a BS in Exercise Science pending completion of an internship at LVHN Cedar Crest Fitness Center. She will continue her education in physical therapy after a gap year to travel and spend time with family.

Evan DeVall – Graduated from Kutztown High School, future plans to be determined.

Hannah DeVall – Graduated from Kutztown High School, will continue her education.

Sophia Hoyer – Graduated from Wyomissing Area Junior/Senior High School and Berks Career Technology Center's Homeland and Protective Services Program. She was a member of the band, drumline captain her senior year; stage crew for junior and senior high productions; and received music and academic award. She plans to attend West Chester University for Biological Medical Lab Science.

Emma Kyle – Graduated cum laude from Penn State Main Campus with a BA in Advertising/Public Relations, minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation and certificate in Diversity Studies. She will intern in State College for the summer with the Downtown State College Improvement District, specifically focusing on their social media and engagement.

Julia Mace – Graduated summa cum laude from Kutztown University with a BS in Psychology and minors in Communications and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. She will be attending Hofstra University for a master's degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Karise Mace – Graduated from Kutztown University with an Ed.D. in Transformational Teaching and Learning.

Sydney Sanders – Graduated from Bloomsburg University with a BSN degree. She will be working at Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Youth News...

June Schedule for our Youth Groups

My E-mail is seth.noggle@gmail.com if you would like to E-mail me and ask to be on the youth group list. That's the best way to be updated on Youth Group activities.

June 5th – No scheduled youth group

June 12th – at Trinity

Elementary Youth Group

Time: 4:30 – 6:00 PM

June 19th – St. John's

Middle & High School Youth Group

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

June 26th – Trinity

Middle & High School Youth Group

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Thank You!!!

Dear Trinity and the Mission Committee,
I really appreciate the college care package. There are a lot of good munchies in there that I will enjoy grazing on. I will be sure to enjoy the Dunkin' gift card as well.

Thank you,
Trevor Shurr

How You Can Help...

Summer Fellowship Opportunities

Last Summer as life began to return to a post-COVID normal, thanks to the initiative of Deb and Mike Sailsbery we had a number of post-worship outdoor refreshment and fellowship opportunities. We are looking forward to similar experiences this year. Here is what you are asked to do.

There is a sign-up sheet on the narthex bulletin board. Simply place your name by a Sunday date and plan to bring some cool liquid refreshment and simple finger snacks that day. We will gather on the lawn by the parlor entrance of the building when the weather is warm and sunny. If the weather is too hot or a bit inclement we can gather in the parlor. A canopy is available to provide some shade.

It is important for us to gather and fellowship with one another as we seek to build and rebuild our relationships.

Kutztown Kitchen

This is our ministry that seeks to live out Christ's teaching to "Feed my sheep," providing home-cooked meals once a month for all who ask. We need helpers for shopping, cooking, packing up, and delivering meals. If you are part of a family or organization that would like to contribute to this ministry, please call or email Ann Towne (484-239-5314, aepriester@gmail.com). All remaining months this year are open.

Student Food Pantry at KU

Thank you to everyone who has contributed time, groceries, and cash donations to this ministry. The pantry will continue on throughout the spring semester and your help would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to contribute food items, please see the list below...

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Peanut Butter | Juice |
| Miscellaneous Snacks | Crackers |
| Knorr Side Dish Packets | Cereal |
| Instant Potato Packets | Breakfast Bars |
| Toiletries | Mac 'n Cheese |
| Soup | Tuna |
| Canned Fruits & Veggies | Pasta |

There is a box outside of the Parlor for the items you are donating. If you have any questions about this program, please contact the church office.

What's Oasis?

Oasis is a non-profit after-school program that's based out of Bethel Nazarene Church found just off of Noble Street behind the Kutztown Middle School. This program has been running for around 7 years and provides a safe and fun place for kids to attend after school.

How can I help?

We're hoping to get some more Trinity people out at this program to build relationships with the youth of Kutztown. The program runs every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3-5:00 p.m. It's only a 2-hour commitment, and it can make a lifetime of change for some of these kids.

You can also make a monetary donation that would go to help buying more games, tech, and food for the youth while at Oasis.

If you're interested, please contact Seth Noggle or the church office.

Shared by Luther Moyer:



For the Garden of Your Daily Living

Plant Three Rows of Peas

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

Plant Four Rows of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant Four Rows of Lettuce

1. Lettuce be Faithful
2. Lettuce be Kind
3. Lettuce be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

No Garden is Complete without Turnips

1. Turnip for Meetings
2. Turnip for Service
3. Turnip to Help One Another

To Conclude Our Garden We Must Have Thyme

1. Thyme for Each Other
2. Thyme for Family
3. Thyme for Friends

Water freely with Patience and Cultivate with Love. There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.





VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2022: "ROCKY RAILWAY"

August 1-5 (Monday-Friday) from 6:00-8:30 p.m.
at St. Paul's U.C.C. (Kutztown)

The St. Paul's/Trinity Combined VBS Program is back for another fun summer in-person program: "Rocky Railway" (Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through), which has been in the making for the past 2 years! Please plan to preregister as soon as possible (but preferably no later than July 1) by completing the attached form or contacting Louise Moyer at 610-641-0507 or LouiseMoyer13@gmail.com. Children from age 2 thru Grade 6 will have a blast! We are also looking for adult and older youth helpers. There is no charge for the program. Come hop on the train & join the Rocky Railway fun!

ROCKY RAILWAY VBS at St. Paul's UCC (Kutztown)

Child's Name: _____ Child's Age & Grade Next Yr: ____/____

Parent's Name: _____ Parent's Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number (during VBS): _____

Parent's Email Address: _____

I am willing to help by:

Station Leader Rotating with Classes Set-Up Decorations

Station Helper Registration/Check-In

June 2022

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| 29 8:00am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship: Holy Communion (In-person & Zoom) 6:00pm Middle/High School Youth Group - Trinity | 30 Memorial Day | 31 11:00am Staff Meeting | 1 | 2 10:00am Bible Study 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal | 3 | 4 |
| 5 8:00am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship: Holy Communion (In-person & Zoom) | 6 Office Closed 1:00pm Art Class 7:00pm Kutztown Community Choir | 7 11:00am Staff Meeting 7:00pm Worship Life Committee Meeting | 8 | 9 10:00am Bible Study 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal | 10 | 11 |
| 12 8:00am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship: Holy Communion (In-person & Zoom) 4:30pm Elementary School Youth Group - Trinity | 13 Office Closed 1:00pm Art Class 7:00pm Kutztown Community Choir | 14 11:00am Staff Meeting 7:00pm Council Meeting | 15 | 16 10:00am Bible Study 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal | 17 | 18 |
| 19 8:00am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship: Holy Communion (In-person & Zoom) 6:00pm Middle/High School Youth Group - St. John's | 20 Office Closed 1:00pm Art Class | 21 | 22 | 23 10:00am Bible Study 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal | 24 | 25 |
| 26 8:00am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship: Holy Communion (In-person & Zoom) 6:00pm Middle/High School Youth Group - Trinity | 27 Office Closed 1:00pm Art Class | 28 11:00am Staff Meeting | 29 | 30 10:00am Bible Study 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal | 1 | 2 |



JUNE

Birthdays

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---------------------|---|---|--------------------|---|---------------------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 Rebecca Gilligan | 4 Alan Robertson |
| 5 Michael Moyer Lucille Bubbenmoyer | 6 Jan Bond | 7 Michael Reffie III Owen Keglovits | 8 Andrea Orwig Gayle Sanders Bennett Collier | 9 Alice Rahn | 10 Jim Johnson Mike Walter | 11 |
| 12 Randy Heffner Elizabeth Diehl | 13 David Loeb | 14 Gary Bond Eric Bubbenmoyer | 15 Nancy Plushanski Colton Ziegler | 16 | 17 Sarah Rosborough Beau deForest | 18 |
| 19 Mary Neuenschwander | 20 Jack D'Andrea | 21 Kylie Ziegler | 22 Erica Parker | 23 | 24 Helene Fuessle Alicia Wood | 25 Cayden Finke |
| 26 Anna Owen Jean Heck | 27 | 28 Stephen Esser | 29 Brett von Bergen | 30 Todd Ziegler | | |

SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA



Gaining Strength: Stronger Together

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you...” [Isaiah 43:2] This is the promise God made to the people of Israel, in a time when the whole nation was suffering the consequences of their turning away from their primary mission: to love God and love neighbor – especially, neighbors with the least advantages, status and resources. For our time, our church, and our synod, one of our most troubling issues is the sin of racism. Isaiah goes on to say: “Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!” [Is. 43:8] This speaks to the first step to take into those troubled waters: opening our eyes and ears to see and listen – with minds and hearts willing to go beneath the smooth surface and stir up the stories and truths that, though troubling, will clear the way for God “to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” [Is. 43:19]

+ Bishop Christopher deForest

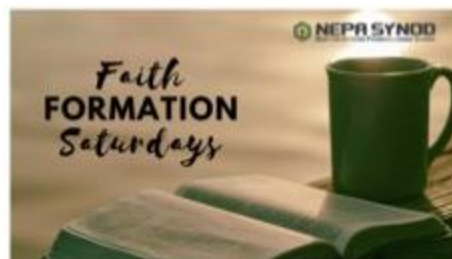
On May 22, 2021, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod hosted a virtual conference called “Trouble the Water,” an inaugural day of racial justice worship and workshops. The goal of this event was to help our congregations to be more welcoming to Black, indigenous, and people of color; and to focus on racial justice and reconciliation within our churches, communities, and synod.

Participants were welcomed with a brief introduction to what we hoped to accomplish, and a request for participants to join us in that troubled water – to be willing to experience the discomfort caused by the ripples, and to plan to ride the waves of change and progress that we hoped to create. The organizers started with a land acknowledgment, acknowledged our shared national history of racism and discrimination, and explained that such historical acknowledgment was not about blaming us as individuals today, but about understanding how we came to be where we are in order to understand how to move forward together.

Next, we all worshiped together with song, prayer, and a sermon by Rev. Dr. James Thomas on “The Sins of Racism.” Following worship, The Reverend CeCee Mills delivered an incredibly powerful keynote address, and after that two sets of concurrent workshops were offered. The first set of workshop options included Understanding Microaggressions, Trauma-Informed Neighborhood Engagement, Understanding Implicit Bias, and a presentation on the community organizing group POWER Northeast. The second set of workshops included Seeing and Disrupting Racism; Understanding White Privilege; and Church Together (led by ELCA Director of Racial Justice Jennifer De Leon).

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The “Trouble the Water” event provided important space for honest, difficult conversation: wrestling with systemic racism and naming our complicity in a broken, inequitable system. Your gifts cultivate a Synod culture that listens to the stories of all people and actively works towards reflecting the Kingdom of God. Our ELCA has a mission of encountering 1 million new, young, and diverse people with the Good News in Jesus Christ. Thank you for your faithful, generous, and consistent giving to Mission Support. It makes a difference as we endeavor to live out that mission. + Rev. Rachael Dietz



**Join us on the 2nd
Saturday of every month!**
(more information on our website)