



Forward Together in Faith: Unlocking Ministry for the 21st Century



The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod “is rediscovering the keys that Jesus gave us – the keys that he gave the apostles over 2000 years ago,” according to Bishop Claire Burkat.

“The keys that enabled them to unlock the power of the Holy Spirit and unleash their minds for innovating, their tongues for communicating, their feet for networking, and their time for equipping. We never lost those keys. We’ve had them in our hands all along.”

“Are we going to keep ourselves locked in? Or will we open up, think outside the church-box, and re- envision what it means to be the Church in the world today?” the bishop asked in her Assembly sermon.

Equipping, innovating, communicating and networking are at the heart of the *Forward Together in Faith* campaign, launched at the 2015 Synod Assembly.

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The *Forward Together in Faith* campaign aims to help congregations revitalize and reimagine ministry and raise \$2.5 million to help us together live into this new vision. It will achieve this by providing funding for helping rostered and lay leaders re-tool for today’s mission challenges, supporting new ministries and future leaders, engaging emerging channels for telling our stories and building grass-roots networks within our Synod – and by listening for the directions that the Holy Spirit will unveil as we move forward.

Our Vision: We’re Ready For Change

During the last year “there has been a lot more listening, discovering and learning...so that we can live into what God is dreaming for you,” said Jeff Kjellberg, owner of Kairos and Associates, consultants for the initiative.

Are we as a synod ready to make changes for the sake of the gospel? Are we ready to network, collaborate and share ideas? Are we ready to take risks and even fail? Are we ready to equip and empower congregations? The Assembly answered an enthusiastic “Yes!” to these questions from *Forward Together in Faith* Chair Ellen S. Daneke, St. Peter, Lafayette Hill.

This is not the Synod’s vision for you. This is your vision.

Equipping Requires Imagination, Knowledge

THE SYNOD'S VISION REFLECTS THE 1ST CENTURY CHURCH YET REQUIRES 21ST CENTURY IMAGINATION AND CREATIVE EQUIPPING OF LEADERS.

A host of issues outside our walls require the church's attention. "The biggest issues are crime, drugs, homelessness and overall poverty," one woman said in a person-on-the-street video shown at Assembly. "I don't really see the church working on issues," another man said. This reminds us that we have a lot of equipping to do, Kairos consultant Jeff Kjellberg said.

More than two-dozen congregations are already learning their strengths and growth areas through an assessment process funded in part by *Forward Together in Faith*. "For us the assessment was a very affirming experience," says Pastor Tim Johansen of Temple, Havertown. "Our church has been through a lot of change, and this was the first time we could step back and find out what our congregation needs." The results affirmed new ministries Temple has initiated and identified areas for action.

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<http://forwardtogetherinfaith.org/equipping/>

Campaign Funds Help Us Equip:

Funds raised through 2018 will start a "mission school" to teach clergy and lay leaders to innovate and collaborate, Bishop Burkat said. Raising more scholarships to help seminarians with education debt is another priority. Campaign proceeds will help congregations participate in the assessment process. Good Shepherd, Coatesville, won this opportunity at the Assembly.

Communicating in Digital and Physical Neighborhoods

TODAY "FEWER PEOPLE KNOW WHAT BEING A LUTHERAN IS ABOUT" SO THE CHURCH MUST USE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND DEVICES TO SHARE THE GOSPEL.

"We have six generations living, and they communicate in different ways" that change constantly, said Bob Fisher, assistant to the bishop for communication. With communications channels and technologies evolving rapidly, "no one knows everything, but together we know what we need," says Fisher.

"The synod has been building a communications network of people in congregations to equip them to tell their stories... and help you listen to people in your digital and physical neighborhoods," said the Rev. Keith Anderson of Upper Dublin Lutheran Church.

As technologies change, congregations have to take risks reaching out, Fisher said. "We're going to make mistakes...and everything we invest in won't last," but when current methods aren't working, we have to risk trying new ones.

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<http://forwardtogetherinfaith.org/communicating/>

Campaign Funds Help Us Communicate:

Proceeds will help the Synod expand its capacity to tell the story of Lutheran witness in our region. We will also equip congregations to leverage digital media by offering training and communications assessments. Faith, Northeast Philadelphia was selected to receive a communications review at Assembly.

Innovating: Taking Risks for God's People

"INNOVATORS ARE WILLING TO RISK. INNOVATORS HAVE AN INNATE ABILITY TO CREATE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING."

"We are relentlessly focused on meeting the needs of people" through new Synod missions, like Living Gospel Ministries, a spiritual and helping community for formerly incarcerated persons, said the Rev. Patricia Davenport, director for evangelical mission. "This ministry is necessary in order to fill the need of the more than 35,000 persons returning to the Philadelphia area from incarceration each year," Says Manson. Many have difficulty re-integrating, finding jobs or locating a faith community, yet are welcomed and loved at Living Gospel.

There are many other innovative programs congregations are creating, like Upper Dublin Lutheran Church's *God on Tap* theology pub; St. Petri-Hope's new Lydia's Closet, which offers clothing and interview suits; and New Creation's ministry with the poor, homeless and addicted under the bridges of Kensington. Imagine how much more we can do together.

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<http://forwardtogetherinfaith.org/innovating/>

Campaign Funds Help Us Innovate:

In recent years budget constraints have prevented starting new missions. As funds are raised the campaign will help fund creative new mission starts. We will also provide grants to help congregations seed innovation. At Assembly, the first grant was awarded to Christ the King Lutheran Church of the Deaf, West Chester.

Networking Forges New Connections

EQUIPPING LEADERS, INNOVATIVE MINISTRIES AND COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL ARE WOVEN TOGETHER THROUGH NETWORKS.

"Networking is a bunch of holy threads together. Often times it looks kind of messy," said the Rev. Jim Goodyear from Gloria Dei, Huntingdon Valley, but "when you put it all together there is a whole lot of beauty," he said. One example of such beauty coming together is Welcome Church's Welcome Threads Project -- both a funding stream and a network that includes artisans among people experiencing homelessness, a local artist and studio, and business students from Johns Hopkins.

Another network is Resurrection, Yardley, who pioneered the Lower Bucks Food Insecurity Alliance with other congregations, civic group and businesses. They do advocacy, prepare 500 breakfast boxes a week for hungry school children, and are committed to being a group of study and prayer. "No matter how big or how small your congregation is, together in partnership you can do more," says Resurrection's Diane Casey.

Learn
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<http://forwardtogetherinfaith.org/networking/>

Campaign Funds Help Us Network:

Forward Together in Faith will help the Synod and congregations create and expand networks, launch new collaborative ministries, and link congregations according to shared passions and challenges.



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Forward Together in Faith...

...is releasing a new way of being church together: collaborating to equip leaders for 21st Century opportunities, innovate new ministries, communicate more effectively and build networks.

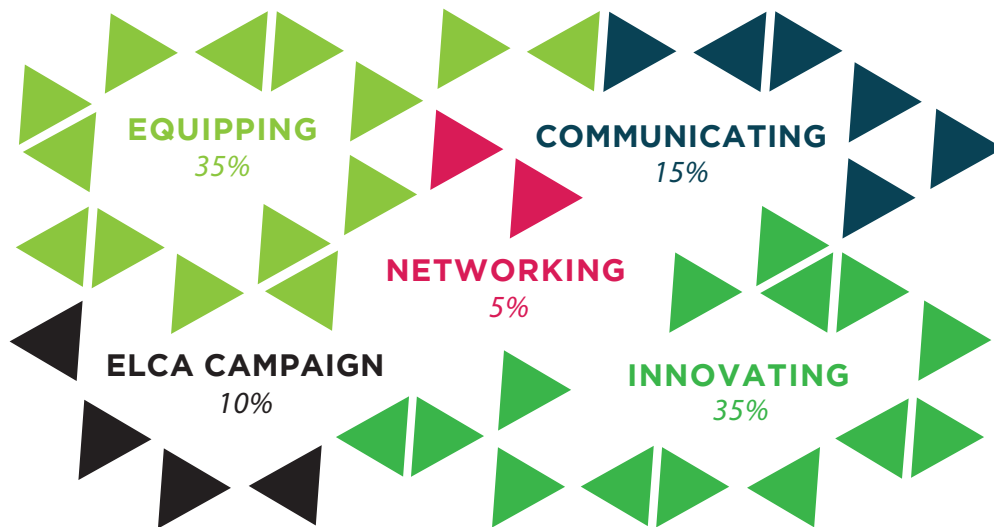
Some initiatives, such as the initial round of congregational assessments, have already begun. Some, including communications

training, are in process. Others, such as scholarships and new missions, will require funding to get started.

The campaign intends to raise \$2.5 million by 2018 to live into this new vision of being Church together. With financial support for these new initiatives, *we are limited only by our imaginations!*

Make a Difference, Support Forward Together in Faith

You can make a huge difference supporting this culture change in our Synod through your support of the *Forward Together in Faith* Campaign. To learn more about this initiative and how you can be involved, visit our website, forwardtogetherinfaith.org, email campaign@sepa.org, or call the campaign office at 267-323-3753.



campaign website: www.forwardtogetherinfaith.org