



MinistryLink

Sharing Ministry in @SEPASynod



March 2015

#WeAreSEPA Living Gospel Ministries

Our Synod's newest faith community, Living Gospel Ministries, recently began worshipping. Its main focus is to accompany and offer resources to people who are connected to the criminal justice system. This includes those returning to our communities from incarceration, individuals living in our communities with a criminal conviction, and the families of those with convictions. Pastor Linda Manson employs workshops, a resource center, support groups, Bible studies, worship services and individual empowerment to support this population.



Manson with clients at a workshop.

As a long-time servant of people involved with the criminal justice system, Manson knows the challenges faced by the formerly incarcerated. The ministry got started when the Synod recognized a need and knew about Manson's previous professional experience and her passion for social justice. This seemed to be the spark needed to begin fanning the flame of what is referred to as L.I.F.E. Ministry (Living Intentionally For Empowerment) at Living Gospel Ministries. Linda Manson shared with us how things are going at Living Gospel Ministries.

HAPPENINGS

April 27

Lutheran Day at the Capitol

A day of worship, learning and advocacy in Harrisburg sponsored by Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in PA.

lutheranadvocacy.org

May 8-9

Synod Assembly

Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, PA
ministrylink.org/2015-synod-assembly-registration-information/

May 29

Lutheran Night at the Phillies

7:05 p.m. vs. the Colorado Rockies.
Deadline to order tickets is April 29
phillies.com/lutheran

ministrylink.org/events

Where do you see God at work?

Through the outpouring of support - we have five core volunteers, a strong partnership with Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion, interns from Community College of Philadelphia—and through the newly started worship and Bible studies.

What are you most excited about?

Today, I am most excited about the fact that we are actually becoming a worshipping community. I believe that adding this aspect will only increase the ways in which we are able to serve our community.

How can people get involved?

We are actively recruiting volunteers for the L.I.F.E. Ministry as mentors and intake clerks. We recently began to seek assistance with grant writing (specific to serving the population connected to the criminal justice system). Financial support is also needed and contributions can be made on our web page at livinggospel.wix.com/life. Check us out on facebook: LIFE at Living Gospel.

What would be your vision for this ministry in 10 years

My hopes for Living Gospel and the L.I.F.E. Ministry are manifold. I would like to see the congregation grow and become self-sustaining while being firmly grounded in a mission which serves the wider community and meets the needs of those who are often overlooked.



Manson (r) with Bishop Burkat and intern, Nate Curtis, at the Graterford Chapel

Photos by: Rev. Jesse Brown (top), Bob Fisher



Yes, We C.A.N. - A Container of Love at Newtown

A large, red shipping container sits in the parking lot of the Lutheran Church of God's Love in Newtown waiting for Saturday mornings. That's when team members open it up and work on its transformation into a medical clinic that will serve a community near Kisumu, Kenya, Africa.

The members of God's Love heard about a similar project and started to dream of how this work could bring a community together. "The feeling of connection we're trying to foster—not just among people here, but also with the community in Kenya where this is going—is why we're doing this," said Susan McDonnell, communications coordinator.

Every Saturday a group gathers to work on the container which includes framing the walls, adding electrical and plumbing, furnishing the rooms, filling the cabinets with supplies, and creating art murals for the outside. When it is finished there will be four rooms (two for examination and treatment, an office, and a pharmacy).

Church and community members have donated all the supplies and labor. McDonnell said that one of the best surprises in all of this is, "You put the word out and never know who's going to show up with what you need."

God's Love is getting help and advice from two sponsoring organizations: Homes of Living Hope, based in Colorado, and Life in Abundance, an African-based organization.

Susan McDonnell expects that the Container at Newtown (C.A.N.) project will continue through the spring. She said the congregation's hope is that people who hear about this not only help make their project a success, but also feel inspired to begin similar projects in their communities.

Katherine Cartwright Knodel

For more information, and ways to volunteer or donate visit godslovenewtown.org/can/



Explore the World of Luther, Cranach and Bach

Deadlines are approaching quickly to register for the Reformation 500 Committee's yearly trip to Lutherland. What better way to prepare for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 than to visit historical sites connected with Martin Luther, the artist Lucas Cranach, and the musician J.S. Bach! The theme is Luther and the arts, and the June 12-21 tour is guided by Drs. Karl Krueger and Michael Krentz of LTSP. Get more information, a brochure and registration forms at ministrylink.org or contact Dr. Krueger at 215.248.6330 or kkruieger@ltsp.edu

A Synod Ministry Profile

Communications



Bob Fisher
Assistant to the Bishop for Communication

What does Synod Communications do?

We tell the story of how Synod and ELCA ministries make a difference through our website, e-newsletters, Facebook, videos and other channels. I also advise the bishop and staff on public relations, and work with the media when they want to cover Synod stories.

How do you help equip communicators?

One of the fun parts of this work is sharing experience and ideas with people doing communications work in congregations, through our Facebook group and learning and networking gatherings. We also share ideas and resources that help congregations in their ministry. I am also available to consult with congregations about their communications needs.

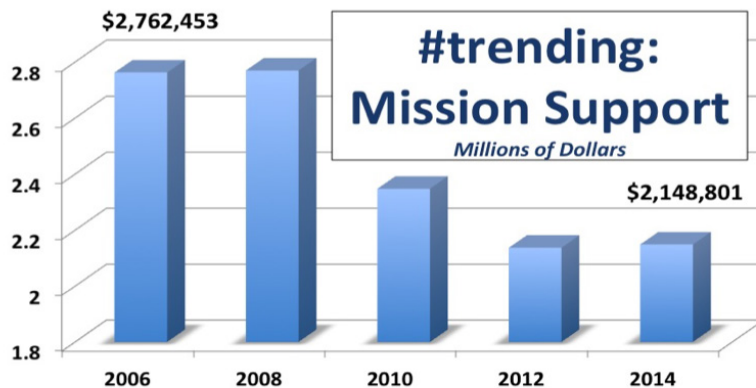
What is your biggest joy in your work?

My biggest joys are telling the stories of people and ministries that are transforming lives, and getting to know others who are making communications happen.

Thank You! Mission Funding Ticks Upward

Thanks to the generosity of many of our congregations, there was an increase in 2014 in Mission Support for Synod and Churchwide ministry after years of declining or flat support. Mission Support from congregations totaled \$2,148,000 -- \$48,000 over budget and \$10,000 more than 2013, but still well below the \$2.7 million received in 2006. Fifty percent of Mission Support is sent on to the ELCA for national and global ministry; the half that remains local accounts for 94% of the Synod's operating revenue and also contributes to seminary, camp, campus ministry and related outreach.

"Your congregation's support enables us to continue to provide a high-level of services to churches, including helping congregations to call new pastors and professional leaders, supporting candidates for ministry, providing youth, communications and global vision programs, and more," said Synod Treasurer Janet Neff. "Thank you for your continued support!"



A Message From the Stewardship Resource Team by Larry Smoose

The Synod Stewardship Resource Team helps strengthen congregations by encouraging healthy stewardship practices—how we manage our planet and our time as well as our finances. It includes congregational practices, and practical assistance for congregations to help members in their personal stewardship.

To fulfill the team's purpose we have led workshops, and are available to provide consultations and resources for congregations.

What is the hope for the team to accomplish?

During 2015 our team will be investigating the kinds of workshops and resources that would be most helpful. We will also have resource packets for every congregation at the synod assembly.

How do I access Stewardship resources?

Visit ministrylink.org/ELCAstewardship to access useful stewardship resources for both church and home. For consultation, contact Pastor Larry Smoose at lvfish1@aol.com.

A Helpful Stewardship Tip:

Setting up an automatic payment from your checking account or credit card means that your personal goal for giving to the church or a charity is automatically taken care of—an act of both faith and commitment.



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Did You Know?

Our Synod's Candidacy Committee identifies and nurtures the next generation of professional church leaders.

The call process helps congregations identify and call new leaders.

14 rostered leaders and **9** lay persons donate **thousands** of hours each year on the candidacy committee.

24 seminarians are under the care and guidance of the candidacy committee.

12 congregations called pastors or lay rostered leaders in 2014.

At the end of 2014:

27 congregations were in transition — in discernment, self-study or interviewing candidates for a new pastorate.

14 of them are currently interviewing candidates.

1 in 5 congregations are working with the Synod in the transition/call process.