

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The primary purpose of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Audit Committee is to assist the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of this synod's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and financial statement audit functions. No officer of this synod or staff member serves on this committee, although the Synod Treasurer serves as a consultant. Michael R. Zeigler, member of Synod Council, currently serves the Audit Committee as the liaison to the Synod Council. The committee meets the requirement that at least two members of the committee be certified public accountants.

Audit for the Year ended January 31, 2020

The Audit Committee met with representatives of Reinsel Kuntz Leshner (RKL) on May 20, 2020, to review the Independent Auditor's Report and related communications for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2020. The report included the financial statements of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which comprise the statement of financial position as of January 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows, for the year then ended. RKL issued an unmodified opinion on those statements which are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The committee recommended that the Synod Council approve the financial statements for fiscal year 2019 and made them publicly available on the synod website.

The committee recommended to the Synod Council that RKL be retained as auditors for FY 2020 (ending January 31, 2021).

Current Members of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is currently comprised of Edward J. Straley (Chair), Linda Bennett, Robert L. Rundle, Jr., Jeffrey S. Fagan, and Terry Snyder. The committee is assisted by Michael R. Zeigler (Synod Council Liaison) and Joseph M. Stepansky, Treasurer of Synod (consultant).

Edward J. Straley, *chair*

GIFT AND BEQUEST ACCEPTANCE COMMITTEE

The Gift and Bequest Acceptance Committee met on January 18, 2021, by Zoom to review part of our policy. The committee recommended to the Synod Council and it was approved to revise the following:

- All gifts of \$10,000 or more and bequest arrangements shall be reviewed for acceptance by the committee.
- All undesignated gifts of less than \$10,000 shall be directed by the bishop to existing ministries or funds of the synod.

Stella Ludwig, *synod council liaison*

LSS HOMELESSNESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Homelessness and Affordable Housing Task Force was formed by Synod Council in late 2019 and as the task force was starting to get to work, the pandemic struck, putting the task force on a hiatus for several months. In late 2020 and into early 2021, the task force began its work adding the Revs. Matthew Best, Jillian Riddle, and Timothy Mentzer as the initial task force members.

The task force has four overarching goals that it is dedicated to working on:

1. Resources – compiling and creating resource information to assist churches in our synod with homelessness and affordable housing. This would include compiling organization and governmental contact information for existing efforts to combat homelessness in our synod.
2. Education – Education about homelessness and affordable housing is important. There are many assumptions about homelessness that are incorrect and unhelpful. Likewise, homelessness comes in a variety of forms throughout our Synod and so one size solutions do not work.
3. Advocacy – We want to work with advocates, LAMPa, and churches to find options to prevent homelessness and help people to leave homelessness.
4. Affordable Housing – We want to work with churches on affordable housing options that can be launched and/or partnered with.

In working towards these goals, we will be living into the very idea of Encountering Jesus. For it is when Jesus encounters us, that our lives are changed and transformed. This is what happens when someone goes from living in homelessness to living in sheltered housing.

The Rev. Matthew Best, *chair*

IMMIGRATION (AMMPARO) TASK FORCE

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

“The AMMPARO Task Force will work to implement the ELCA churchwide strategy of AMMPARO in the Lower Susquehanna Synod through sharing, praying, acting, and advocating (SPA) for migrant children, their families, and those in their countries of origin working to fix the root causes of migration.”

Members: The Rev. Jennifer Hope-Tringali and Deacon David Hope-Tringali, co-chairs; the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, staff liaison; the Rev. Dan Long; Deacon Kristen Barnes; Sister Dottie Almoney; the Rev. Dr. Charles Oberkehr; the Rev. Wicky Barnes III; David Atkinson; Carol Forbes. *To learn more, check out their biographies under “Justice Ministries” on the synod website.*

Our task force has met twice so far:

- Plugged into the churchwide AMMPARO network
- Engaged in Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) calls and seminars
 - “Beyond Borders and Barriers—Creating an Equitable World for Migrant Women and Girls” 80 million people displaced worldwide. Half are women and girls.
 - Working to end detention
 - Emphasis on education
 - Climate change will add more displacement
 - ASAP (Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project)
 - “LIRS Town Hall—First 30 Days” President Biden’s Actions on Immigration
 - Reversal of ban of Muslims and Africans
 - Elimination of term “alien” to be replaced with “non-citizen”
 - Prohibition of religious-based discrimination
 - 200 million people will be displaced by climate change by 2050
 - Interactive map: maptheimpact.org will show you how your county is doing with immigrants.
 - “Stand Up Speak Up” in spring sponsored by LIRS
- They Are Us: Lutherans and Immigration (2nd ed.) by the Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman and Ralston Deffenbaugh book launch
 - Help people out of the shadows and create a path to permanence.
 - Listen/tell stories
 - NOT “Is she legal?” but “Is she my neighbor?”
 - Sharing worship space with other communities
 - Tell our own immigration stories and trace our family histories
- Encouraged congregations to be involved in “Hope for the Holidays”
- Synod has resources available for congregations on this topic
- Justice Ministry blog on synod website
- Once quarantine has passed, continue to develop Guatemala trips (Tree4Hope)
- Coordinated an Epiphany service for the synod weekly worship
- Assessing how we can make congregations aware of the importance of this ministry

Deacon David Hope-Tringali and the Rev. Jennifer Hope-Tringali, *co-chairs*

KONDE DIOCESE COMMITTEE

The mission of the Konde Diocese Committee is to assist congregations and the bishop fulfill the covenant agreement between the Lower Susquehanna Synod and the Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. This mission is fulfilled by providing opportunities to learn about our covenant relationship, encourage dialogue, discovery, and ministry opportunities among congregations of this synod and congregations of the Konde Diocese, and where possible, encourage personal meetings by way of visits to our respective churches.

We offer you this report of the past year:

This past year proved to be a challenging year for our companion diocese (along with the rest of the world) due to the complexities and harsh nature of COVID-19. A great disappointment was the cancellation of a planned trip to the diocese by a group from our synod. Through mission support from the Lower Susquehanna Synod, we were able to send the diocese \$25,000 to purchase PPEs to help combat the spread of the virus and to help support medical staff and hospitals within the diocese. Our gift was graciously received and was reported to be extremely helpful.

Bishop Edward Mwaikali continues to lead with optimism and faith, despite a challenging year. The transition under new leadership has brought positive change. One note-worthy change is the relocation of the diocese office from Tukyuyu to Mbeya. The Mbeya region is home to the majority of the diocese staff, making the commute to work much more manageable. The move to Mbeya also provides a wider range of resources and support to the inner workings of the diocese. We view this change to be good and a blessing to our companions.

The most notable achievement for the committee and the relationship has been the call of Deacon April Trout. April is serving in the diocese as our synod's Program Coordinator on behalf of the relationship. Reporting to the bishop of the Konde Diocese and the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, and working in cooperation with the LSS Konde Diocese Committee, the Program Coordinator ensures year-round representation with our companions in the Konde Diocese (KKKT) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and provides support to the core work of our relationship in four key areas: administration, relationship building, hospitality, and project management. April will spend 80% of her time in the Konde Diocese and 20% in our synod. During her home stay, April will be meeting with congregations as part of her work to build relationships between congregations of our synod and the diocese.

The committee continues to work on improving the lines of communication between our churches. This is easier said than done. It requires persistence and patience on our part. While personal visits are the best way to solidify this communication, we continue to work with the bishop and his staff to find ways to improve communications between congregations. Deacon April Trout will prove to be most helpful in helping to improve any communication gaps, both short and long term.

The committee strives to work with individuals, congregations, and other third-party organizations to further the mission of our covenant agreement. As previously mentioned, such partnerships have helped support the expansion of the Itete Hospital, especially their ability to provide health care to women, pregnant women, newborn and young children. The hospital has opened a new building to provide care to these groups, and our partnerships with you, as well as our international partners, are helping to improve health care in this rural area.

Several people from the committee are available to come to your congregation to discuss this unique partnership in ministry. We also are seeking persons interested in serving as members of the committee. And we pray that personal visits will be able to occur.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support of this most vital ministry of our synod. We continue to focus on education, health care and church to church relations as our priorities. Your ongoing support ensures that these goals may be addressed. There is more to accomplish, and we invite your participation in future endeavors.

The Rev. Angie Hammer, *chairperson*

LGBTQIA+ AFFIRMING TASK FORCE

Mission Statement

The LGBTQIA+ Affirming Task Force is dedicated to developing partnerships, providing rostered leaders and congregations with theologically sound resources, and creating enlightening and engaging worship opportunities that celebrate our God-given, God-created unique identities, while supporting and accompanying LGBTQIA+ people, families, and our community.

Task Force Membership

Beth McKinley (chair), the Rev. Joel Folkemer (vice chair), the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson and the Rev. Richard Jorgensen (synod staff), the Rev. Martin Zimmann, Michael Youse, the Rev. Angela Hammer, the Rev. Michael Allwein, the Rev. Traci Glover, Sister Davia Evans, Vicar MJ Irvin-Stellabotte, Vicar Jonah Davis, Trey Perez, Adam Bachman, Kristen Oleary, and the Rev. David Fisher.

2020 Activities and Major Events

- Led by the Rev. Angie Hammer as chairperson, the committee convened three times.
- Determined the primary mission statement, as noted above, and rough agenda for the rest of the year.
- Compiled a list of resources, as posted on the task force's webpage.
- Designed, recorded, and posted an online memorial service in commemoration of the Trans Day of Remembrance on November 20, 2021.

2021 Goals

- Maintain an up-to-date listing of synod LGBTQ+ resources, both online and at the Resource Center.
- Produce LGBTQ+ worship resources, especially for LGBTQ+ holidays and commemorations, and in conjunction with other social justice ministries.
- Be present at a variety of LGBTQ+ events throughout the synod and the year.
- Collaborate with affiliated synod ministries and affiliated organizations to be more LGBTQ+ affirming in our programs and policies.
- Establish relationships with regional like-minded, affirming LGBTQ+ denominations and organizations.

Beth McKinley, *chair*

LSS LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Lutheran Disaster Response Network had a busy year in 2020. It was a year unlike any other. Much like all of life in 2020, the work of the synod LDR Network was quite drastically different as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. If nothing else, the shut-down caused by the pandemic made real the sentiment often repeated in the disaster response world that “all disasters are local”.

Since traveling was basically impossible because of expectations of quarantining and the need to maintain social distance, the mission trips for which our synod LDR Network has been known over the past twelve years or so just were not possible in 2020. Three trips were planned for the year – to West Virginia, New Jersey (youth trip) and Puerto Rico. All three were cancelled. Instead of going away to do this work, volunteers worked throughout the year, following CDC recommended guidelines, helping homeowners affected by Hurricane Isaias in eastern Pennsylvania and the summer floods of 2018. That work has continued into 2021 as well.

In addition to that work, Bishop James Dunlop and Pastor Glenn Beard, coordinator of the LSS LDR Network, also approved grant requests from congregations and other ministries across the synod who are providing enhanced outreach, meeting human need created or exacerbated by the pandemic. About a dozen different grants were issued from the synod Disaster Response Fund, created by the Always Being Made New campaign. Congregations have supported that fund, and our synod was also the recipient of some funding from the ELCA which was used for this purpose.

We continued to invite congregations and individuals to support this important work by making contributions to the synod Lutheran Disaster Response Fund. Donations, with the designation “Synod LDR Fund” in the memo, can be sent to the synod office at 900 S. Arlington Avenue, Suite 220B, Harrisburg, PA 17109.

If you would like to learn more about disaster response efforts across the country and throughout the world, please visit the LDR website at www.ldr.org. If you would like to learn more about the work of our synod network, please reach out to our synod network director, The Rev. Glenn A. Beard Jr., at (717) 471-1067 or gbeard@luthercare.org.

The Rev. Glenn A. Beard Jr., *LSS Lutheran Disaster Response Network director*

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD MISSION FUND COMMITTEE

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Fund Committee has been constituted to administer the LSS Mission Fund. This fund, established by the Synod Council, is supported by bequests, trusts, endowments, planned and deferred gifts, assets from closing congregations, gifts from merging and consolidating congregations, and gifts from other congregations, individuals, and entities. The assets of the fund are invested in a manner consistent with the purpose of the fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide initial funding support for the growth of Word and Sacrament ministries within the territory of this synod, such as funds to acquire sites and to provide grants to new mission congregations, funds to provide grants to congregations who have committed to special plans to expand their ministries, and funds to provide grants to congregations who have elected to relocate or consolidate with other congregations. In addition to the expenditures for these purposes, the fund may make loans to congregations, if, in the judgment of most of the committee, the purpose of the loan is consistent with the purpose described above and the loans are adequately insured.

The amount of money in the LSS Mission Fund as of January 31, 2021, is \$182,298. Included in this amount is \$39,500 which was the completed loan payments from Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Lancaster. \$5,000 was forgiven since they paid off the loan early. LSS Mission Fund monies are invested in the Mission Investment Fund.

For the 2020 fiscal year, which runs February 2020 through January 2021, the fund received \$29,640 in contributions.

During FY2020, the LSS Mission Fund distributed \$122,100. The committee determined these distributions based on the ministry partner fund request applications that were received. The distributions were as follows:

- \$14,750 to Trinity, Mechanicsburg for Stepping Out and Bridging the Gap, community outreach (for 2019)
- \$18,500 to Trinity, Mechanicsburg for Stepping Out and Bridging the Gap, community outreach (for 2020)
- \$4,000 to Salem, Ephrata for Managing Motherhood, a ministry that distributes diapers and other essentials for mothers and children
- \$850 to St. Peter, Mechanicsburg for Wee Worship, a new worship service designed for small children and their adults
- \$10,000 to St. Paul, Carlisle for Cultural Competency and A Special Place, a program for neighborhood youth
- \$8,000 to the Sudanese Authorized Worshiping Community, to support the pastor's salary
- \$12,000 to St. Peter, Middletown, to support Together, their community outreach afterschool program
- \$12,000 to St. Paul, Penryn for redevelopment
- \$12,000 to Christ, Duncannon for redevelopment
- \$10,000 to Harrisburg Area Youth Initiative (HAYI)
- \$15,000 to St. Paul (Wertzville), Enola for redevelopment
- \$5,000 to Trinity, Greencastle for redevelopment

Funds committed for this and upcoming years:

- \$12,000 to St. Peter, Middletown to support Together, their community outreach afterschool program in both FY2021 and FY2022
- \$9,000 to support the ministry of Pastor Ron Costen at Messiah, Harrisburg and with the synod office as an expert and lawyer in preventing elder abuse and his work with the Heritage Community Task Force, developing an emerging status for aging congregations

The members of the committee are Bishop James S. Dunlop; Joseph M. Stepansky, synod treasurer; the Rev. Richard E. T. Jorgensen Jr., director of evangelical mission; the Rev. Elizabeth G. Martini, assistant to the bishop and administrator of the fund; the Rev. Robert J. Myallis; the Rev. Jack M. Horner; the Rev. Brian A. McClinton; Rose Tonkin; Terry Snyder; Angela Thomas; Jennifer Lau, synod acting vice president. Jennifer Lau served as scribe in 2020. The committee met in January, March, June, and September.

The members of this committee urge our rostered ministers, lay leaders, and congregations to support the Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Fund with gifts and offerings. Your generosity will enable our congregations and other ministries to expand their mission, to take advantage of new opportunities, and to meet new challenges in order that we may be a vital church, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in this new day. Likewise, the committee is encouraging of thoughtful applications for fund monies for ministries that support the growth of Word and Sacrament ministries.

The Rev. Elizabeth G. Martini, *administrator of the LSS Mission Fund*

COMMITTEE FOR STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION AND MISSION SUPPORT

Synod Constitution C11.01.09. The Committee for Stewardship Education and Mission Support shall be composed of no more than 7 persons. This committee shall implement the adopted stewardship strategy in the life of the synod. This committee shall help the members of this synod to develop faith-filled lives; articulate the compelling story of the church's mission; affirm, equip, and nurture leaders so that they will guide their congregations to be stewards of the Gospel; affirm, coordinate, and develop methods of financial support for this church's mission; and coordinate partnerships among manifestations and expressions of this church.

The Committee for Stewardship Education and Mission Support of the Lower Susquehanna Synod embraced a vision of Christofrom community and focused its work on fostering Lutheran communities that:

- Return a percentage of the financial resources that God gives us for the shared work of local communities, synod and churchwide ministries; and
- Care for others and creation with Christ's love.

Foci: Storytelling, Communications, Education

To that end, this committee has three foci: storytelling, communications, and education. The audience for all resources are Lutheran communities (congregations, authorized worshipping communities and the contexts of those communities) within the territory of the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Each focus is led by a committee member (team leader) with a group (or team) to accomplish the goals described below.

The purpose of **storytelling** is to connect congregations with the people and ministries transformed through mission support and special projects of the synod. The storytellers are in the process of creating their first story about the Lutheran Camping Corporation and how mission support enables campers to safely encounter God. It is the committee's hope that this first video will inspire the storytelling of other congregations throughout the synod. Team Leader: Andrea Oslikova, aoslikova@uls.edu.

Communications serve to identify the most efficacious means of relaying the stories and education resources produced by the committee and other teachers, as well as focusing messages on the stated themes of financial giving and caring for others and creation. This team began its work in earnest at the outset of 2021 with writing thank you letters to congregations and individual givers to mission support. Team Leader: Pastor Kevin Stout, kcstout6@outlook.com.

The **Educative Resources** offered through the committee are geared toward congregations as the audience and offer materials based upon interests reported by those congregations through pastors and other users. An effort will be made to expand and diversify the pool of educators to include ordained ministers and lay leaders with expertise in stewardship matters related to returning a percentage of financial gifts and caring for others and caring for creation. This team is determined to meet the needs of congregations as swiftly and accessibly as they are requested. Restyled time and talent forms that treat the parishioner as a disciple and the work of the church as a communal effort are available. The first online resource provided is the 3@3 Planned Giving Academy held on April 12, 13, and 14, 2021, at 3 p.m.: Three one-hour online workshops around planned giving with Sister Marianne Brock, ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner for Central Pennsylvania and Pastor Liz Polanzke. Pastor Richard Jorgensen, Director for Evangelical Mission and committee liaison, working with Keith Mundy, have planned an online giving workshop. Team Leader: Pastor Liz Polanzke, lpolanzke@yahoo.com, 717-654-2334.

Invitation

New committee or team members are always welcome. If you have an area of passion, interest or skill with which you connected in this report, please don't hesitate to reach out to any team leader. New passion, energy and interest are always welcome and will be engaged!

The Rev. Liz Polanzke, *chair*

SYNOD WORSHIP COMMITTEE

As with all aspects of our lives, the Lower Susquehanna Synod Worship Committee also saw changes to its work. At the beginning of the 2020, we planned worship for the synod's Healthy Leaders Retreat and began work on planning the annual Chrism Mass. When it became clear that the pandemic would prevent us from worshipping in person, we adjusted and developed the synod's first streaming service of the COVID-era.

Despite all of the complications, the church still saw the celebrations of several ordinations, carried out as safely as possible: one in February, one in July, and three in December. We also installed the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson and the Rev. Beth Martini in their positions as Assistants to the Bishop.

Our current members include: the Rev. Rebecca M. Ajer Frantz, Daniel Deitzel, Margaret Folkemer-Leonard, the Rev. Mark Oldenburg, the Rev. Jillian E. Riddle (SC), the Rev. Kevin C. Stout, Debra E. Reeder, Stephen A. Strauss, the Rev. Albert J. Domines, the Rev. Carl P. Rabbe, the Rev. Sean S. Titus, the Rev. Gretchen S. Ierien (SC liaison), the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, assistant to the bishop, staff.

The Rev. Rebecca Ajer Frantz, *chair*

TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Our Mission: Toward Racial Justice seeks to actively encourage, empower, and equip members of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the ELCA in and for the faith-based Gospel call to racial justice.

Membership: The Rev. Beth Martini, synod staff liaison; the Rev. Tim Seitz-Brown and the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, co-chairs; Gale du Pont; Stacy Schroeder; Alyson Yost; Moses Kavishe; Jacqueline Smith-Bennett; Sister Dottie Almoney; Sister Megan McClinton; the Rev. Matthew Lenahan; the Rev. Titus Clarke; the Rev. Jay Eckman; Bishop Penrose Hoover; Vicar Elizabeth Eckman.

During 2020 the Toward Racial Justice Task Force of the Lower Susquehanna Synod embraced the circumstances of the pandemic to expand the reach and breadth of our offerings and resources. We engaged as a committee in individual study and reported back through regular meetings with the increased availability of free, digital continuing education offerings around racial justice issues. We shared those resources with our wider community through twice monthly blog posts and social media (the Toward Racial Justice Facebook Page and Facebook group) as well as through the synod website and e-news. We also recorded training segments and offered introduction to racial justice trainings digitally, continuing to equip and support synod rostered leaders in their ministry. We additionally produced digital offerings of worship and education including a Juneteenth synod worship and a Black Leadership forum that was viewed over 1,000 times and was shared in seminary classes and by other denominations, as well as in ELCA congregations. Several of our members continue to facilitate congregation book studies and learning groups, to initiate racial justice task forces in their congregations (at least three new congregation task forces grew out of the synod task force in 2020), and to offer temple talks at individual congregations upon request in the belief that we are called to be church together. The work continues.

The Rev. Tim Seitz-Brown and the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, *co-chairs*

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FOR RELIEF PROJECTS

2020 Ingathering

The Lutheran World Relief (LWR) mission statement reads, “*Affirming God’s love for all people, we work with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice, and human suffering.*” Its vision statement is “*Empowered by God’s unconditional love in Jesus Christ, we envision a world in which each person, every community, and all generations live in justice, dignity and peace.*” It is through this organization that **86** Lower Susquehanna Synod congregations along with **18 sister congregations outside of our synod** continue their commitment and dedication to share Jesus’ love with individuals around the world who are suffering due to poverty, fleeing war-torn countries with only the clothing on their backs, or recovering from natural disasters.

Through this most challenging year, Jesus’ love shines through not just with the phenomenal gift giving in our synod, but also through the following 14 Conference Coordinators who reach out and provide the needed information supporting the churches in their conferences. This dedication was key in making the October 2020 Annual LWR Ingathering appeal successful. A big THANK YOU goes out to the following volunteers: Sandra Brandt, the Rev. Katie Brantner, Linda C. Brocious, the Rev. Cynthia Chambers, Susan Delong, Karen L. Fisher, Norma R. Good, Donna L. Greifzu, Elaine B. Hock, Sarah Krumbine, Susan Lyons, Kathleen Moe, the Rev. Kevin O’Byran, Theda Raffauf, the Rev. Edgar C. Reed, Carolyn A. Reeder, Janet Schroeder, Pamela W. Wagner, Tina Zellers, and Linda Zilinski.

The 2020 Ingathering provided both material aid items made and collected by congregations, and money donated to ship these gifts to areas where they were most needed. The 2020 reports show these 104 congregations donated the following: **Mission Quilts – 3,112; Personal Care Kits – 2,867; School Kits – 4,611; Fabric Kits – 70; Baby Care Kits – 111; Blankets – 112.** Additionally, congregations reported that they distributed 415 quilts and blankets locally.

Congregations in other synods and Lutheran church bodies also collected and transported items. In our synod, 37 congregations donated a total of \$12,855.98 to the LWR Quilt and Kit Shipping fund. Moreover, 12 more bricks were engraved in the Good Samaritan Quilt Plaza at LWR headquarters located in Baltimore, Maryland, as a result of contributions of at least \$500 being sent through our synod office from July 2019 through June 2020.

Due to the challenging times this year several congregations found new ways to work with their congregation families and churches around them to put together donations. This synod was one of the few synods to provide donations to LWR!! Plus, the financial donations to the LWR Quilt and Kit Shipping fund and synod congregation’s donations were substantially more. This synod stepped up to assist those in the most need, during the most challenging time!! We give thanks to God for the gifts we have been given and for moving us to share with our brothers and sisters. In faith, we walk beside our neighbors around the world so that all might know the love of God.

Looking Forward

Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health have jointly launched Corus International, a model of the international NGO of the future and the new parent of a family of faith-based nonprofits and for-profits. “The challenges of those we serve around the world are complex, interconnected and, most of all, solvable,” Corus President and CEO Daniel Speckhard said. “Corus blends an array of proven approaches with deep expertise and fresh innovation to fuel the kind of exponential impact we desperately need in these unprecedented times.”

In addition to Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health, the Corus family includes UK-based technology company Charlie Goldsmith Associates; impact investing firm Ground Up Investing; and direct-trade coffee producer LWR Farmers Market Coffee.

Longtime collaborators, Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health have for more than a year blended LWR’s work in rural economies and humanitarian assistance with IMA’s expertise in public health, together expanding efforts to end Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example. Now, alongside Corus, they are mounting a worldwide initiative to prevent and treat COVID-19 while fighting poverty stemming from related economic setbacks.

In 2020, our synod congregations contributed \$46,734.31 to the LWR General Fund that allows these development programs to happen. Additionally, Fair Trade sales programs assure that farmers and craftspeople receive fair wages for their products, enabling them to buy food for their families, provide education for their children, and have better housing and medical care.

As we look forward to 2021, congregations are encouraged to donate extra soap and fleece blankets to local shelters or local needs. Soap will continue to be a part of the Personal Care Kits and Baby kits. Fleece blankets are no longer used by LWR.

Our continued focus is to encourage congregations to work in partnership with other congregations in the synod or around them to share the gift of giving to those around the world most in need. We plan to gather data regarding when, where, and the time congregations currently meet to make quilts or kits, then place this information on the synod’s or/and LWR website so individuals who would like to participate will have the opportunity. We would also like to provide information/stories on where and who received donations, and the

impact it had on those in need. Lastly, we will continue to place ingathering packet information on the synod website and where to find supplies on LWR website. This will enable us to use funds most wisely.

Thank you to all who continue to make a difference in lives around the world as we live out our faith by caring and loving our neighbors by sharing our resources.

Sue Gordon and the Rev. Martha Boyd, *synod coordinators for Lutheran World Relief (LWR)*

WORLD HUNGER COMMITTEE

The ELCA Lower Susquehanna Synod's World Hunger Committee (LSS-WHC) is tasked with serving as hunger advocates, sharing information about local, national and international hunger issues, and with an ongoing financial support for and engagement with ELCA World Hunger. The committee meets periodically and works with both our synod and the churchwide organization.

Rostered ministers and laity from across our Lower Susquehanna Synod serving appointments to the committee in 2020 include: Cheryl Burns, Faye Nichols, the Rev. Maureen Seifried, the Rev. Ronald Costen, the Rev. Godfred Effisah, Stephanie Johnson, Shirley McGowan, Andrea Oslikova, and Keith Shively. The Rev. Jillian Riddle is the Synod Council liaison, and Tracey DePasquale serves as a consultant. During 2020, the synod staff liaison transitioned from the Rev. Elizabeth Martini to the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson.

The committee continues to support hunger education and advocacy within our synod and throughout the state by collaborating with the Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa). Display kits containing samples of materials developed by ELCA World Hunger, as well as current handouts relating to synod-specific activities, are available upon request to congregations, youth groups, and Legacy Fund Hunger Grant recipients. Visit www.elca.org/hunger to view examples or access ELCA resources.

Each year the committee oversees the distribution of a portion of the Legacy Fund distribution to benefit local hunger initiatives. In 2020, two rounds of granting were completed. The first was in the spring and was aimed solely at supporting ending hunger caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The LSS-WHC distributed \$34,250 in the spring of 2020 to congregations and ministries in order to alleviate hunger on account of the pandemic. A second round of granting was held in the late summer/early fall, at which point \$20,500 was distributed.

In 2020, no new applications were received by the ELCA granting sources from LSS ministries. ELCA World Hunger continues granting to the Truck Stop ministries of St. Stephen, New Kingstown and the Wittel Farm Growing Project, both of whom were granted multi-year grants in previous years. Additionally, Tree of Life Lutheran Church was awarded an ELCA Daily Bread matching grant.

The Lower Susquehanna Synod World Hunger Committee looks forward to continuing the important work of hunger education, financial support, and community outreach in 2021. Congregations and ministries of our synod with hunger ministries are welcome to apply for ministry partnership grants. If you are interested in assisting the committee with events, activities, grant management, or serving as a committee member, please contact Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson or Cheryl Burns.

The Rev. Elizabeth G. Martini, *staff liaison*