LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD LUTHERAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION

Our synod Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Leadership Team has been on an intentional sabbath since the 2018-2019 school year. No officers were identified or elected in 2019.

Since the merger of the position of synod Director for Children, Youth & Family with the position of synod Director for Faith Formation and Resources in 2018, creating the position of synod Director for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry, there were responsibilities within each role that had to be re-examined. Direct oversight and mentoring of the LYO Leadership Team was one responsibility that needed to be reimagined.

This is not to suggest that growing, equipping and shepherding young leaders through the ministry of the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) has not continued. It does continue, with our director working cooperatively with members of our synod’s Youth Ministry Vision Team, alongside leaders of our Leadership Training Camp staff. However, the intentional election of an LYO Leadership Team, remains suspended for the short-term.

The ministry that has continued, which remains specifically designed to foster the growth of young leaders and aligns well with our synod’s missional goal of equipping leaders for service in Christ’s name, is our annual Leadership Training Camp (LT Camp). It was one of the best attended camps we have had in the past thirty years. Since all Lutheran youth qualify as members of LYO, our LYO remains strong behind the leadership of our LT Camp Alumni.

We came up with a plan to continue engaging with our LT Camp Alumni in a series of opportunities that combined leadership development with intentional practice:

1. A number of them served as cabin counselors for their peers at LT Camp 2019 and assisted our staff in all aspects of event management from meal prep, to small group leadership, worship leadership, community-building, and more.
2. Some served as volunteers at our annual ALiVE Event in September 2019. In their role, they served alongside adult Small Group Leaders helping to lead small group discussions and implementing the event curriculum. They served as song leaders for large group and campfires and helped lead games and activities during free-time.
3. At Winterfest 2019, the annual senior-high youth event, held at the Spooky Nook complex in December, LT Camp Alumni were invited to meet with camp staff to continue their leadership development with peers.
4. In the wake of the COVID-19 restrictions this spring, the LT Staff team are envisioning digital opportunities for gathering LT Camp Alumni online in virtual community for networking and ongoing edification and training. (We had hoped to sponsor a weekend retreat which is unlikely to occur this spring due to the pandemic)

We continue to look for ways to name and celebrate the gifts of our young leaders in their first-third of life and identify significant roles of leadership to help put those gifts into practice (Called “Key-Chain Leadership” by the Growing Young Initiative). We further encourage our young leaders to discern a call to vocations both inside and outside the church, allowing them to live in ways that reflect their call to a life of discipleship. At the heart of the organization continues to be a commitment to engage and equip young leaders for service to their Lord Jesus, to God’s church, to their congregations, communities, families, and to the world.

Charlie Roberts, director for faith formation and youth ministry
WOMEN OF THE ELCA – LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOP

“As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society and the world.”

February 21-23, 2020 was our Conference of Presidents. Our theme was “The Power of Community.” It was a time to listen and learn. Most of us were able to room with the president of our sister synod. We were able to communicate and form friendships that we will reaffirm at our triennial convention this summer. We had workshops on community organizing, our triennial convention, and a presentation from those of us who participated in AMMPARO and the Border Servant Corps trip to El Paso, the Border Wall in Anapra, Chihuahua Mexico, and Las Cruces. We also celebrated BOLD Women’s Sunday.

Saturday, May 11, 2019 was our Day of Renewal at St. Bartholomew United Church (ELCA), Hanover. The Reverend Angela Zimmann from United Lutheran Seminary spoke about the hospitality she experienced during her time in Jerusalem. Our special offering went to the “Annual Fund” at the seminary. We are excited to have her return as our 2020 Camp Hebron Retreat Leader. This year’s Day of Renewal will be Saturday May 16, 2020 at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, Harrisburg. Norma Good will speak about her work with Lutheran World Relief, “Where God Leads Us.” Our offering will be for Christ Lutheran Church Health Ministries.

Our 30th Annual Camp Hebron Retreat was held November 1-3, 2019. Pastor Denise Horn’s theme was “Women of Faith, Their Story and Ours.” We learned of biblical women and shared personal stories of faith. The offering for Manow Lutheran Secondary School in Tanzania will cover a one-year full scholarship.

Our 32nd Annual Convention was held August 16-17, 2019. It was a first with St. Paul Lutheran and Brickerville United Lutheran of Lititz working together. Butterflies were everywhere. Our theme was “Lead Me Where My Trust is Without Borders.” The two highlights of the convention were the bishop’s dialog on “The Future of the Church” and our worship service.

Our 33rd Annual Convention this year will be held at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Berrysburg, on Saturday August 15, 2020. Our theme is “Praising God with Music.”


We continue to AdvoCaTe - ACT - on sex trafficking issues. We were pleased when the “Buyer Beware” bill passed. This addressed the customer. WELCA also has joined the World Council of Churches in their global ecumenical campaign, THURSDAYS IN BLACK. It is about solidarity, resistance, and resilience “toward a world without rape and violence.”

Lois Ann Griffiths, president, Lower Susquehanna Synod Women’s Organization
LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION OF THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD

In December 2019, the leadership roles of the synod unit of Lutheran Men in Mission were vacated due to health issues of a member and the death of the Treasurer, Ken Kahler.

Be encouraged as you continue in your calling with your local ministry for men and anyone who is in need. We are called through our baptism (Isaiah 43:1), equipped through Bible study (John 8:31), and sent (Matthew 28:19-20) into our daily living experiences.

Please use the additional resources provided by Lutheran Men in Mission, www.lutheranmeninmission.org - John Sundquist, Executive Director, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631; phone 773.380.2566; email john@lutheranmeninmission.org.

May God our Father, the endless source of all grace, mercy, peace, truth, and love continue to be your Guide through Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Bill Schirmer, secretary