



NWPA SYNOD NEWSLETTER

Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

November/December-2018



Christmas Eve Services across the NWPA Synod

Good Hope, Oil City 7:00 p.m.; Zion, Oil City, 7:00 p.m.

Good Hope/Zion Lutheran Ministry and neighborhood service at
Zion, 11:00 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church, Clarion PA 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.

Twelve Apostles, Saegertown 5:30 pm.

Prelude concert. 6:00 p.m. Candlelight Eucharist

Mt. Zion Ger, Tionesta, Candlelight Service at 11:00 p.m.

Jefferson Central Lutheran Ministry: Grace, Brookville 7:00 p.m.
Trinity, Reynoldsville 10 p.m.

Mount Zion, Airport Road, Punxsutawney: 7:00 p.m.

First English, Punxsutawney: 9:00 p.m.

Mount Zion, Trade City: 11:00 p.m.



*If you would like your congregation added to this list, please send it to Ellen at the office, this list will be rotating around Facebook.

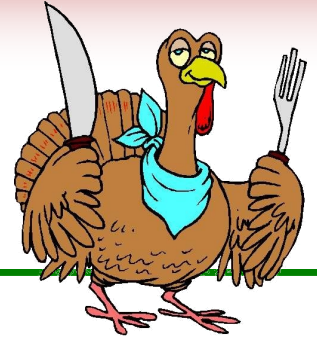


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“And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.”

– Dr. Seuss, [How the Grinch Stole Christmas!](#)



Calendar

November

3-LWL Continuing Ed.-Rev. Bond-Synod Office

3-TEEM- Basic Practices of Spirituality-AM* Telling the Good News-PM

4-Fall Back! Winter Solstice begins.

10-TEEM- Basic Practices of Spirituality-AM* Telling the Good News-PM

10- WELCA Council Meeting

11- Veterans Day

12-World Hunger Meeting- 10AM

16-17-Committee on Church Vocations

17-TEEM- Basic Practices of Spirituality-AM* Telling the Good News-PM

23-Thanksgiving- Office Closed

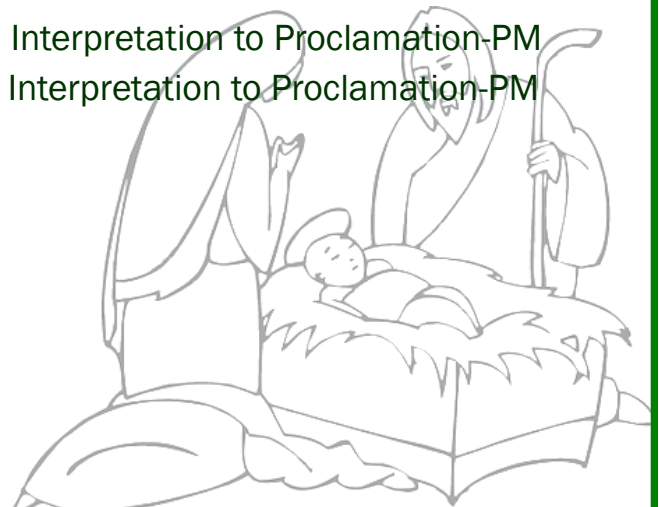
24-Black Friday- Office Closed

December

15- TEEM- A History of Christian Theology-AM* Interpretation to Proclamation-PM

29- TEEM- A History of Christian Theology-AM* Interpretation to Proclamation-PM

Dec 22- January 1-Synod Office Closed





Important Reminders

2019 Commitment Requests will be sent out in the next few weeks. Please remember the Synod uses these reports to calculate our support to the ELCA and other projects across our territory. Reports must be filled out and returned no later than March 1, 2019.

2018 giving reports will be sent out the end of November to verify monies you have sent to the Synod as of Oct 31, 2018. Please keep an eye out for these reports.

Rostered Leader ID Cards are being prepped and printed and will be out by the end of the year. These cards are to be used as ID to verify Rostered status in the ELCA and in our Synod.

Trinity 321



We welcome a new cooperative ministry in Indiana, PA!

3 congregations (Zion Lutheran in Indiana, IUP's Lutheran Student Ministry, and Luther Chapel in Coral, PA)

2 pastors—Pastor Tedd Cogar, and Pastor Sarah Aasheim

1 mission



NWPA Synod- Green Team



ENERGY ... How much **energy** do you use in your home in a typical year? How much **energy** does your church building use in a typical year? There are two reasons that it is important to know this information: First, do you like to throw away money? Second, do you like to waste the God given natural resources used to make that **energy**?

*It is possible to use less **energy**!* I hope you are asking, "How do we find out how much **energy** we use and where does it come from?" To answer that question, you can conduct an **energy** audit? There are resources available from the U.S. Department of **Energy**, PA Department of Environmental Protection, and local **energy** companies. An **energy** audit is the first step to assess how much **energy** your house or church building consumes and to evaluate what measures you can take to make them more **energy** efficient. Our goal is to reduce the amount of **energy** used without negatively affecting the lighting and heating in our buildings.

Here are resources to help you get started:

U.S. Department of Energy

- www.energystar.gov/congregations
- Energy Star for Congregations power point presentation from the recent Energy Star tour: https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/d_mgroce%40labyrinth.net?projector=1
- Andrew Kreider, Energy Star Lead, U.S. EPA Region 3, Philadelphia, PA 215-814-3301, kreider.andrew@epa.gov

Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

- www.energysavepa.com
- <https://energysavepa-business.com/incentives/commercial-lighting/>

Penelec Customers

- Home – You may be eligible for a free onsite audit.
- Call 1-855-823-4298 or email firstenergysau-dits@goodcents.com

- https://firstenergycorp.com/save_energy/save_energy_pennsylvania/penelec.html
- A church building is considered a business – they will analyze the account and make recommendations, but not come for a free onsite visit. https://firstenergycorp.com/save_energy/save_energy_pennsylvania/for_your_business/pennsylvania_businessenergyanalyzer.html

Central Electric Cooperative Customers

- Contact Laura Hensley, Member Energy Specialist, Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., 1-800-521-0570 x2132, for a phone energy audit. www.central.coop
- Energy Solution Center website. <https://www.central.coop/content/energy-solutions-center> or contact Laura for info by mail.
- SmartHub provides access to meter data down to the hour. Also, an app: <https://www.central.coop/content/about-smarhub>

National Fuel

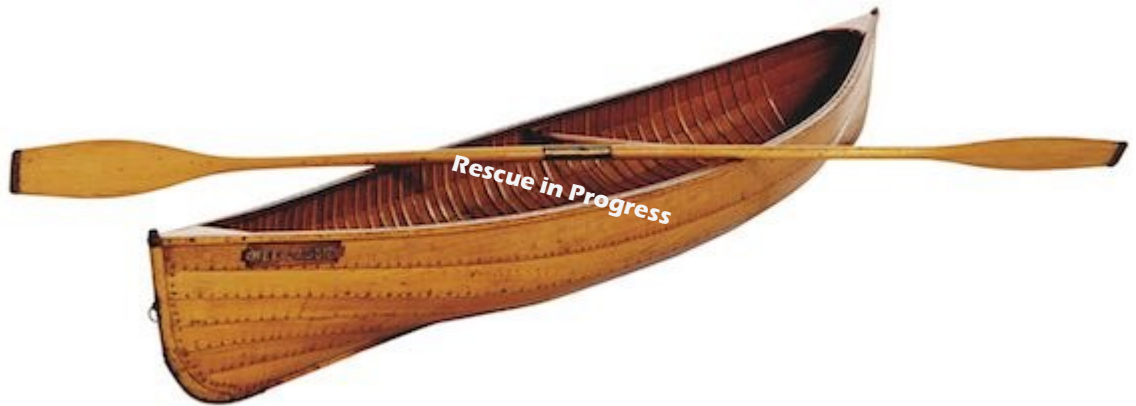
- Free Energy Audit available - Home and Businesses PA: 814-871-8200 or Toll Free: 1-800-365-3234
- To schedule a church or residential audit contact: Russ LaFuria, Energy Consultant 814-871-8691 (45 min. - 1 hour)

If you would like to be on the **NW PA Synod's Green Team's** email list or would like more information about the Green Team, contact Chair, Rev. Ken Laber (jklaber@velocity.net), or member Dennis Groce (d_mgroce@labs.net) with your name and email address.

Martin Luther, "God is wholly present in all creation, in every corner, behind you and before you." (LW 51:43)



Help! There's a Canoe on My Front Porch



**The conversation around leadership in the
church today continues!**

November 14, 10:00-Noon

**Christ Lutheran Church
396 Buhl Blvd
Sharon, PA**





Pastor Harold “Jake” Jacobson

Is pleased to announce the publication of his book **Holy Talk: An Introduction to Scripture for the Occasionally Biblically Embarrassed.**

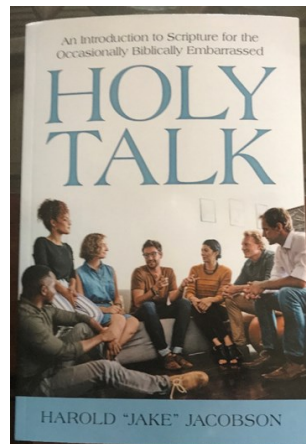
It is now available at a discounted price for synod congregations and individuals from; **www.Lulu.com**

(Simply type Holy Talk into the search bar at the top of the page.)

It is also available at Amazon.com at the non-discounted price.

Electronic versions are available at both Lulu and Amazon.

A preview copy is available at the synod office.



Family Advent Day or Family Advent Weekend

Saturday, December 1st, 2018

from 10:30 am - 2:30 pm

OR

Friday, November 30th through Sunday, December 2nd, 2018

Registration Deadline: November 16th

Visit: www.Lutherlyn.com for more information!



So I Wrote a Book

Earlier this month my book, **Holy Talk: An Introduction to Scripture for the Occasionally Biblically Embarrassed**, was published. It marked the end of a two-year writing process and a lifetime of engaging in conversation with the scriptures.

In addition to holding a book with my name on it I was shocked by the changes for and in me as I wrote. I was educated in high school and college to be a scientist (I hold an undergraduate degree in chemistry). When I enrolled in Gettysburg College as a Religion/Biblical Studies major I brought that mindset to the study of scripture. The Bible was a book to be studied. I approached the task with the question, “What does this mean?” That said, I would then bring the wide-range of tools from Biblical scholarship to address the particular reading before me. I would wrestle with the text until I had satisfactorily wrung and answer out of it. Armed with my “meaning” I could then launch into preaching or teaching on the text.

While the question, “What does this mean?” and the attendant scholarship involved is important and useful, what I discovered in writing my book was that there is a far more pressing question namely, “What do we hear?” The danger of the “meaning” question is that it makes the Bible an object (it is a short slide down the slippery slope from there into the Bible as idol which occurs far too often in our churches today). In addition, making the Bible an object also can turn it into a viable weapon. Well-armed with our “correct” meaning of the Bible we set off to prove our point and put an end to any hope of conversation around the text. The writers of the Bible (particularly the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures) used the Bible as a jumping off point to begin to talk about God and the life of faith. We often use it today simply to shut our opponents up and end any hope of meaningful dialog around the Bible. Both liberal and conservative circles succumb to this temptation.

In contrast, when we approach the Bible with the question, “What do we hear?”, it opens up a conversation both with the Bible and with those around us. This “listening” is not a revolutionary new approach. It has been used in spiritual circles for centuries under the

Continued page 9



BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

226 SOUTH STREET RIDGWAY, PA

ONCE AGAIN BRINGS YOU

"SANTA LUCIA"!

JOIN US FOR A WONDERFUL
TRADITIONAL CELEBRATION OF
LUCIA, CHRISTMAS HYMNS, CHOIRS,
COFFEE, GOODIES AND MORE!

EVERYTHING BEGINS AT
4:00P.M. ON DECEMBER 9.
FIND OUT WHO IS THIS YEARS'
SANTA LUCIA
COME FOR AN EVENING OF FUN
AND START OFF YOUR HOLIDAY
HERE!



MERRY CHRISTMAS



Wrestling with Jakob continued...

label, *lectio divina* (divine reading). In its simplest form it is sitting quietly with the text and paying attention to the words or phrases that catch your mind's ear. I begin with reading the text out loud several times listening for the words that jump out at me. I jot them down and then prayerfully sit with those words and phrases with the question, "God, what are you trying to say to me through this reading today?" Sometimes the answer is immediately evident but often it may take hours or days for the message to become clear. You can do this alone, with your family or in a group.

The goal of my book was to create a resource for both the "meaning" and the "hearing" questions. Much to my amazement, as I sought meaning it was conversation with the text and God that ensued... Holy Talk. What would happen if we began to practice this holy talk in our churches, our homes, and in our lives? We won't know until we try... Come, join the conversation!

Please Vote!

***Stop by Palmiero Toyota
between 11/1 & 11/27 and cast your vote
for Bethesda in the Give Back Program!***

Vote at Palmiero Toyota

16165 Conneaut Lake Road
Meadville, PA 16335



Bethesda is asking for your help!! We have applied for the [Palmiero Toyota Give Back Program](#) to request funding for a new playground for our campus Education Center!

NWPA SYNOD, ELCA

22598 Titusville Road
PO BOX 43
Pleasantville, PA 16341-0043

www.nwpaelca.org



Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA



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A Word from Ellen



Holiday Greetings everyone! It's hard to imagine but we are fast approaching the end of 2018, and I feel like it just got started. It's funny as a kid the years lasted forever, it felt like an eternity waiting to be grown up. But now having Scarlett, the years are going by so quickly, I swear I only just started my position here at the Synod Office, and Scarlett was just a teeny newborn last week? But now that fiery red head is working her way towards 2, and the terrible two's have started. But I am excited to show her the magic of the Holiday season, and instill in her the true meaning of Christmas. With that being said I hope your Holidays are warm, full of faith, friendship, family, and of course food.

Happy Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas,

Ellen

Local Happenings

Home for the Holidays

Nov 29-Dec1

Titusville PA

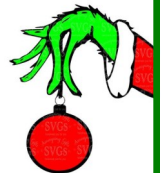
Festive fun for the whole family! Includes three days of a Pop Up Shop with local vendors, Holiday at Burgess Light Display, Drive Through Live Nativity at Grace Fellowship Church Friday and Saturday nights from 6-9 p.m., shopping, dinning, kids' activities, live performances arts and crafts, treats and more!



Festival of Trees

Friday, November 23, 2018

10:00 AM - 8:00 PM



Bayfront Convention Center

The 2018 Festival of Trees will be held at the Bayfront Convention Center from November 23 through November 25, featuring a gallery of uniquely decorated trees, local entertainment, live reindeer during select hours, holiday displays, and six rooms from Santa's Castle filled with activities for children to explore. Returning to the event is a teddy bear clinic where families can have a bear examined by Saint Vincent Hospital's team of teddy bear specialists. Bring a bear of your own, or take home one of ours with a \$10 donation.