

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Learning Ministries Day Saturday, January 26

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven
(snow date: February 2).



The keynote speaker is Elsayed "Steve" Elmarzouky, spokesperson for the Reading Muslim Community.

Steve is a Reading area restaurateur, past president of the Islamic Center of Reading, and chaplain in the correctional and healthcare systems in Berks County.

He speaks to many audiences about his personal journey of faith as a practicing Muslim in Egypt and the U.S., and how his understanding of Islam reflects principles familiar to all people of faith.

Workshops will be offered in the morning and afternoon. Participants can choose to learn about new resources, learn a skill, or choose a workshop for their own personal growth.

LM Day is a wonderful time to meet other Lutherans in our synod - youth and adults alike - and to do some networking and glean ideas from one another. A lunch is provided for participants.

For more information and to register, please visit the synod website at <http://nepasynod.org/event/learning-ministries-day-2019>.

ELCA Youth Leadership Summit 2018



[Two youth from our synod, Gianna Valenti from Good Shepherd, Wilkes-Barre and Ben Knox from Hope, Reading plus Pastor Becca Middeke-Conlin, St Paul's Easton attended the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in Ashland Nebraska. The following is a writeup by Gianna.]

At the beginning of this year, if you asked me where I'd be this November, I would have thought anywhere **but** Nebraska. However, I am glad I ended up in the chilly, midwestern state at the beginning of November; for if I hadn't, I would not have learned so many new things, met so many new people, and grown so much closer to God.

This year's ELCA Youth Leadership Summit was all about Advocacy, more specifically Lutheran Advocacy. Throughout the weekend we had multiple speakers talking about many topics, including Environmental Conservation, World Hunger, AMMPARO, Women's equality, Latinix & African-Descent ministries, and LGBTQ+ acceptance in the church and the world. Each station opened my eyes about what I am capable of doing for the world with the help of God. Personally, the speakers talking about racial injustice and LGBTQ+ acceptance touched my soul the most; I will be working towards a more accepting future!

Besides the overall theme, I found joy in meeting other Lutherans from across the country. Within the large camp where we stayed, I met so many amazing people and learned about their vast and different lives and cultures. The group of girls I stayed with and the group I prayed with were all amazing people that I greatly wish to meet again!

Did your congregation receive the January monthly mailing?

If you did not, please contact us at nepsinfo1988@gmail.com.

Perhaps there is no email on file for your congregation, or there may have been some other problem.

The synod recognizes that this transition may be inconvenient for a few congregations, and we are trying our best to make it as smooth as possible. Thank you for your patience.

Brenda Stauffer Retires



Brenda Stauffer, administrative assistant to Bishop Zeiser, retired at the end of December.

Since beginning her work at the synod office in 2009, Brenda has been responsible for maintaining leadership rosters, providing forms/letters/certificates for congregation leadership transitions, managing the computer database, providing clerical support to the bishop, and managing his appointment schedule.

She also kept notes of the staff meetings, monitored office supplies, and prepared and distributed the annual "Confidential Report to the Bishop."

Brenda has been a trusted colleague, faithful worker, and an effective administrator. We thank her for her dedicated years of service and we wish her lots of joy in retirement.

Kristen Glass Perez New Muhlenberg College Chaplain



I am thrilled to be called as Chaplain at Muhlenberg College where I started on June 15, 2018. I am also very thankful for the hospitality shown to me from both the college community and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod as I begin this new call.

Before coming to Muhlenberg, I served as Chaplain and Director of Vocational Exploration at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois in the Northern Illinois Synod. Prior to that, I served as Director for Young Adult Ministry for the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America in Chicago, Illinois.

My "home" synod is the Minneapolis Area Synod, where I grew up and the majority of my family still lives. It is fun for me to be an East Coast resident for the first time and to experience the beauty and unique setting of the Lehigh Valley!

As I begin this new call, I am impressed with Muhlenberg College's commitment to spiritual exploration across a variety of religious and non-religious traditions and am excited about working with a religious life team that serves the entire community. I understand the Chaplain's Office to be the perfect place to offer space for hospitality, reflection, and innovation as an integral part of campus life.

I am also intrigued about the very real possibilities for collaboration across the college and the synod to explore intersecting questions of meaning, purpose, and identity. I believe that college is the perfect time to find the liminal or "in-between" spaces where students explore foundational questions about who they are, what they like and don't like, and how understanding their own answers to these questions will help them to make an impact on the needs of their various communities.

I am delighted to join both the Muhlenberg College community and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and begin our work and life together.

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