

**Section G**

**Reports of**

**Agencies**

## **Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation (Bear Creek Camp)**

[www.bearcreekcamp.org](http://www.bearcreekcamp.org)

Bear Creek Camp and Conference Center is the **year-round outdoor ministry** of both the NE and SE Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA. It is our mission to provide opportunities for adventure and discovery within God's creation and within Christian community.

We enter into 2011 as a time of great opportunity at Bear Creek Camp. Our Board stands strongly committed to several areas of growth:

- Reversing the downward trend in summer camper numbers. While the declining numbers may be a national trend, we are committed to reversing it at Bear Creek Camp through strong programming, marketing and partnership efforts with the congregations in the two synods
- Focusing on building and strengthening relationships with the congregations in the two synods. We are redesigning our Outreach and Ambassador teams so that we can provide more visits with congregations and have more conversations about how Bear Creek Camp can be a resource for your ministry.
- Re-visioning who and what Bear Creek Camp is by entering into an 18 month process with A Renewal Enterprise. We have already begun conducting interviews and focus groups designed to have conversations with people throughout the two synods. We will use this information to help us discern where God may be leading Bear Creek Camp and what we can all do to move this ministry in God's direction. We are excited to be hearing what your thoughts and opinions are in this process and we look forward to where we will emerge.

What would a year in ministry be without challenges? We enter into 2011 with a definite leadership challenge. Pastor Robert Stover, our Executive Director, and Rick Frederick, AiM, our Assistant Director, both resigned in the first quarter of 2011. Rick has moved on to an Executive Director position at a camp in Western PA and Pastor Stover felt it was time that he pursues other opportunities. Both of these men and their families have served the camp well and have left the camp better off for having been with us. We have been blessed by their service and we ask that you join us in praying for their time of transition.

We are excited to announce that we have completed a search for an interim director to serve as we undergo our revisioning process. God had provided us with several excellent candidates and after conversation and prayer, the board has extended an offer to one and it has been accepted. This news will not be announced to their current congregation until after Easter so we will be holding their name in confidence until then. This candidate comes to us with many qualifications that make them an excellent choice as we move through this time of growth and transition as a camp.

The board has been working on supporting the staff at Bear Creek Camp so that we are prepared to enter into the summer season fully energized and ready for the people that God will send to us for care, instruction, inspiration and relaxation.

Thank you for being a partner with us as we move forward and strive to become the best outdoor ministry resource to the churches in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Respectfully submitted, in peace,

Mark A. Ristine  
Bear Creek Camp Board Chair

### **Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania - 2011 Report to the Synod**

Dear Partners in Christ,

This been a year of many changes in Pennsylvania, in the ELCA and at Lutheran Advocacy Ministry. In the midst of these changes we remain deeply thankful for our partnership with all the Pennsylvania synods and ministries and awed at the ways in which God is present, moving Lutherans around the state to voice their faith convictions in the public arena on behalf of the poor and the vulnerable. Thanks be to God! Read about some of the areas of our ministry below:

- **Hunger** – Hunger advocates in Pennsylvania united around strong funding the **State Food Purchase Program**, which funds food pantries and nutrition programs. LAMPa gave support to establishing a **Hunger Garden** on the State Capitol grounds as a teaching tool and reminder about the pervasiveness of hunger in the Commonwealth. LAMPa led Lutherans around the state in the passage of federal **Child Nutrition Reauthorization**, holding workshops and Paper Plate Campaigns over the summer. The ELCA Bishops in Pennsylvania signed a joint letter to Congress expressing their support.
- **Poverty** - LAMPa staff helped to draft and move a resolution to conduct an **in-depth analysis of the occurrence, effects and trends of poverty** and low income and to make recommendations for comprehensively addressing these trends. This initiative will encourage **private-public partnerships** in addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty and involve hearings and public education on poverty in the Commonwealth. While the resolution did not receive a vote by the end of the session, we have begun outreach to members of the new administration and legislature.
- **Health Care** – LAMPa focused efforts on saving **adult Basic health coverage**, which covers 42,000 working poor adults. LAMPa was also part of the Pennsylvania Health Access Network conference on **federal reform implementation** in Pennsylvania, including focus on the creation of the exchanges and rate review.

- **Affordable Housing** - After a multi-year effort, LAMPa advocates were part of the passage of a **State Housing Trust Fund**, a vehicle by which to expand safe and affordable housing in the Commonwealth.
- **Creation Care and Tax Policy** – LAMPa is a go to-place for Lutherans with questions about **natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale**. LAMPa took part in a state-wide Consultation of Lutherans on Natural Gas Drilling and has acted as a resource for congregations in issues related its impacts on creation and communities. LAMPa has acted in Harrisburg primarily around support for an extraction tax that will protect the environment and support impacted areas.

LAMPa has partnered this year with Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod leaders on justice ministries, advocacy education, and provided resources and support to ministries addressing hunger and poverty. We are thankful for our synod Policy Council representatives – Mr. Robert Fisher and the Rev. Serena Sellers, LAMPa Policy Council Chair and for the leadership of Bishop Burkat.

LAMPa launched a new website in 2011, [www.lutheranadvocacypa.org](http://www.lutheranadvocacypa.org) and a monthly e-newsletter, *LAMPa Highlights*, to better serve, inform and lead Lutheran voices for justice.

In Christ,

The Rev. Amy E. Reumann, Director

## **LUTHERAN CHARITIES**

We are grateful to the individuals and congregations that supported the Lutheran Charities Agencies again this past year through their contributions. Thank you.

The challenge to the Lutheran Charities Advisory Committee has been to focus on ways individuals and congregations can be aware of the outstanding work of the social ministries in the communities of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The committee strives to become more effective in communicating with congregations and to provide opportunities for interaction with the agencies.

Volunteer speakers representing the agencies have brought the message of their work to congregations during the year and that opportunity is available for this coming year.

Join us for the 21<sup>st</sup> SteepleChase Ride and Walk on Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup>. The 2010 Bike Ride and Walk was held with 150 bikers and several walkers representing 35 congregations. St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Audubon has become the host church for the riders. Along the route St. Matthew in Chester Springs, St. John in Phoenixville, Advent in Harleysville, and Augustus in Trappe, provide rest and refreshment for the riders. At two of the churches the Boy and Girl Scouts have assisted in helping the bikers feel welcome.

We are encouraging children and families to walk and bicycle on the bike path along the Schuylkill trail. We have added this feature to accommodate individuals and families who were not interested in riding on the roads or wanted to walk for the event.

We are grateful to the many individuals and congregations for their continued support of the work of our Social Ministry Organizations through congregational giving, United Way, the Phone-a-thon, and the SteepleChase Bike Ride and Walk. Thank you for your continued support.

Carol Hammarberg  
Lutheran Charities Coordinator



# THE PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S WORK IN 2010

## OUR MISSION

Article 12 of the Council's *Constitution and Bylaws* sets its mission: "The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is a voluntary association of separate and autonomous Christian churches, within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through which its members seek to manifest their fellowship (koinonia) with one another, to engage in common ministries of witness and service, and to advance towards the goal of visible unity." This report illustrates how the Council tried to fulfill its mission in 2010. For additional information, visit [www.pachurches.org](http://www.pachurches.org).

## FELLOWSHIP

The former presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Pr. H. George Anderson, once noted, "It is clear that personal relationships between our bishops and leaders of other traditions enabled them to take the lead in ecumenical arrangements of all sorts." The Council, too, believes that personal relationships, together with the fellowship that is both created by and nurtured by them, are central to ecumenism. It has tried to build and sustain fellowship among the leaders of its member church bodies by

- engaging in common worship and prayer at board meetings,
- encouraging leaders to share stories of their coming to faith and their call to ministry,
- encouraging the sharing of both the opportunities offered by and the concerns of member church bodies around Pennsylvania, and
- hosting an overnight gathering for religious leaders at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College.

## COMMON MINISTRIES OF WITNESS AND SERVICE

### WITNESS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Through its Commission on Public Witness and its public advocacy ministry, the Council witnessed on behalf of social justice and for the common good. Highlights in 2010 include:

- writing and promoting “God’s Kingdom is for Everyone: Discussing Poverty in a Christian Framework,” a four session study guide exploring poverty and ways Christians can work toward addressing it;
- advocating for comprehensive health care reform; while the legislation enacted did not address all the concerns deemed significant by the Commission, it continues to educate constituents about the effects of the law;
- drafting a resolution on Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction for consideration and endorsement by the Council’s Board of Directors at its October 2010 meeting; and
- raising awareness about regional opportunities and equity issues in Pennsylvania through Building One Pennsylvania and screenings of “The New Metropolis.”

Information about these highlights and other activities, including the study guide on poverty, can be found at [www.pachurchesadvocacy.org](http://www.pachurchesadvocacy.org).

Working in coalition with like-minded groups—both religious and secular—is essential to the Council’s public witness. Some of the coalitions are informal; others, like the Interfaith Justice Coalition, are ongoing opportunities for sustained engagement with allies representing a variety of constituencies. The Council’s role, whatever the coalition, includes representing the interests of the Council and its members as outlined in its *Principles for Public Advocacy*. Information on issues and opportunities for involvement can be found at [www.pachurchesadvocacy.org](http://www.pachurchesadvocacy.org).

### MINISTRIES OF SERVICE

The Council supported local churches engaging in trucker and traveler ministry along a portion of I-80, where a chaplain served along with volunteers and local church leaders. The Council also supported local churches (in the Fruitbelt and in Chester County) engaged in ministry with migrant and seasonal farm workers. Field chaplains and volunteers offer farm workers and their families worship services, spiritual counseling, clothing and other material aid, assistance with immigration issues, emergency transportation for medical care, translation services, emergency housing and food, and recreation.

For these ministries of service, the Pennsylvania Council of Churches provided management services, coordination, and advocacy. The Council business office handled insurance, chaplains’ salaries, and expenses. Designated funds and the funds raised by local committees meet the basic expenses of the program. Unfortunately, funds designated for these ministries will be exhausted by the end of 2011 and the Council’s budget does not allow for allocating replacement funding. Starting in 2012, while the Council will still process payroll for these ministries, all other support services will become the responsibility of the individual ministries.

## WITNESS AMONG PERSONS AT LEISURE

The Council also worked with local park ministry committees to assist in chaplain recruitment and program administration. The annual training held just after the Memorial Day holiday ensured that chaplains were equipped for their ministry and a mid-season retreat gave them opportunity to share experiences and further hone skills. Twenty chaplains served campers in 33 state, federal, and private campgrounds.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR CHURCH WORKERS

The Council sponsored a three-day continuing education event for clergy and other church workers, the Pennsylvania State Pastors' Conference. Planned by a committee of representatives from member bodies, the conference featured Shane Clairborne, Eric Law, and a host of workshops on evangelism and stewardship. The 2011 conference, scheduled for November 14–16, will focus on “Practical and Practiced Awe” and feature plenary presentations by the Rev. Dr. Anabel Proffitt of Lancaster Theological Seminary and the Rev. Dr. John A. Berntsen of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

### **TOWARD VISIBLE UNITY**

In one sense, all the ministries and activities of the Council witness to a visible—though still incomplete—unity. Cooperating together in significant ways, the forty-three member bodies of the Council give evidence of their unity in Christ. Even as we are mindful of all the barriers to full visible unity that still remain, we can rejoice in the measure of common commitment and common life that we can demonstrate.

We continue to look for new ways to strengthen our witness to visible unity and to encourage member church bodies to “live into” their ecumenical relationships—especially relationships of full communion, interim Eucharistic sharing, Churches Uniting in Christ, and Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.

### **THE MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATION**

Officers for 2010 were the Rev. Dr. Marja Coons-Torn (Conference Minister, Penn Central Conference, United Church of Christ), president; Bishop Gregory A. Pile (Allegheny Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), vice-president; Elder Barbara Adams-Smelter (Synod of the Trinity, Presbyterian Church (USA)), secretary; and Mr. David Hoffman, CPA (Susquehanna Conference, United Methodist Church), treasurer.

The Council ended 2010 with an operating deficit of nearly \$3,700 (a deficit of over \$60,000 had been projected). Careful stewardship, a better return on invested funds, and a very small increase in support from member church bodies made the difference. Deficits are projected for 2011 and 2012.

Finally, the Council serves as the “landlord” for the Pennsylvania United Church Center, an office complex in suburban Harrisburg in which its offices are located. At present, all available space is occupied, with 19,500 square feet under lease to 22 tenants.

## REPORT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA LUTHERAN NETWORK

### Mission

The Pennsylvania Lutheran Network (PLN) is committed to cooperation, collaboration, and support for mutual benefit in ministry to insure that no part of the church need stand alone in our calling to be faithful to the mission God has entrusted to us.

### Value Statement & Purpose

The PLN is an aggregation of the Specialized Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in Pennsylvania intentionally organized for mutual support and collaboration as we work to extend and focus the ministry of ELCA congregations in Pennsylvania.

The PLN is a facilitating mechanism through which the synods, institutions, and organizations related to the ELCA in Pennsylvania can maintain relationships, cooperate, and collaborate in ways that can fulfill already existing commitments to the ELCA, to each other, and to the public.

The PLN is not a new organization to join, but a network in which all can participate, fully or selectively, to sustain values and fulfill goals for their mutual benefit in ministry, education, and service in church and society.

### Activity

The PLN gathers annually in assembly to consider a topic of interest, to reconnect partners in ministry, and to provide the opportunity for cooperative efforts in our shared ministry.

In 2011, the assembly focused on the February 2011 restructuring of the ELCA and its implications for Network's member organizations and, indeed, for all of the ELCA baptized here in Pennsylvania. The Reverend Dr. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director for the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA, was the keynote speaker on the theme *Restructuring and Resurrection*. A Panel of participants that represented outdoor ministry, campus ministry, ELCA colleges, theological education, social ministry organizations, evangelical mission, and advocacy ministry reflected on implications of the restructuring for both their individual ministries and for their partners across the commonwealth; in turn this guided table conversations among all participants. Finally, a discussion, led by Jill Schumann, President/CEO of Lutheran Services in America, provided the opportunity for deepening conversation about the Network's future.

A Planning Council meets between assemblies to provide direction for the Network.

Bishop B. Penrose Hoover, Convener

## **Report of Region 7 for 2011 Assemblies**

As I write this report, I am conscious that the landscape of Region 7 and indeed the church wide expression of the ELCA are quite different from a year ago. In October 2010 a complete restructuring of the church wide offices and staff resulted in the elimination of 65 additional positions. Regional coordinators, who were Vocation and Education and Synodical Relations staff, are now part of the very large Congregational and Synodical Mission staff. Our main areas of responsibility are unchanged and include candidacy, coordinating assignment of first call candidates and administrative support for campus ministry. However, with the elimination of central (Chicago based) staff in these areas, the coordinators' role has become more crucial in order to maintain a consistent ministry across the church.

In addition, due to financial realities, for the first time in its history, Region 7 does not have an administrative assistant. It was with deep regret that we said good-bye to Yvonne Curtis at the end of November and closed the office at LTSP. The main office for Region 7 is now located with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, presently in Wescosville. A small office at the seminary is used as a satellite for the coordinator's meetings with students and faculty.

Three campus ministry vacancies were filled during the past year at Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education in New York City, Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY and the Lutheran-Episcopal Campus Ministry at Temple. I am now working with the campus ministry in New Paltz, NY to fill a vacancy there. Quadrennial Reviews have been done for the campus ministry at Albany, NY as well as the campus ministries in the Boston/Cambridge area, Kutztown University, the campus ministry at St. Peter's in Bethlehem, PA that serves Lehigh University and University Lutheran in Philadelphia.

I have worked with the candidacy committees of all of our synods and conducted theological review and competency assessment panels for most of them. In October we held our annual regional candidacy consultation for the staff and chairs of each synod committee along with staff at LTSP who relate to candidacy. John Berntsen at the seminary and I have met with students to assist them in fulfilling the various steps in the candidacy process.

In January, we had a very successful first call theological education event for leaders in their first three years of rostered ministry. More than 90 attended the four day event. Craig Satterlee, professor at LSTC, was our plenary speaker and we offered workshops and excellent worship opportunities and time for conversation and fellowship.

For nearly six years I have appreciated the opportunity that I have to serve in Region 7, working with the bishops, their staff, the candidates for ministry, the faculty, staff and students at LTSP and the campus ministries and other networks to strengthen the mission of the Church in the Northeast.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Peggy M. Wuertele  
Region 7 Coordinator