



**Allegheny Evangelical
Lutheran Church**

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AELC News

News from and around
Allegheny Evangelical
Lutheran Church

SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

"Come, to know the love of God: Go, to make it known."



Grace and peace to you from God our Creator and our Savior Jesus. Look at your hands. What do you see when you look at them? Do you see the work of God

within them? Do you see indentation from hard work, the mistakes and accidents that have left scars? How often do you care for your hands? Do you use lotion to keep them hydrated? Do you wear gloves when working them hard? Are they neglected? Can you see God's work within them? These hands of yours, of mine, are gifts of God. They allow us to do so much, and offer us choices. We can grip them into fists, or open them in invitation. We can raise them in joy, or fear. We can use them together in community for support and uplifting, or we can use them alone, straining beyond their capabilities. We can use them for grand gestures, or for minute activities. I am continually amazed by the vast array of gifts we have been given for activities through God's grace. How long a list we could create with the gifts that we use our hands for to care for others in our community and around the world.

Sometimes we may feel disconnected, with the pandemic, with frustration that things didn't happen "our" way, that someone said something or didn't, and we take offense. We struggle as humans to understand one another and live in community together, can be challenging in the best of times, and during all that we have lived through this past year and a half, downright exhaustive.

Come, to
know the
love of God:
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We become reactive and highly emotional taking things that were never meant to be personal, personal. The hope that I continue to see through these times are in the gifts of God for us all. Our hands that do God's work in the world. Our hearts that allow us to see God in the image of those whom we disagree and struggle with. They are created in God's image just as we are. Our continual invitation to "Come, to know the love of God" is filled with hope for our community, full of imperfect people, who are seeking to see God at work in the world thru each other. We are a work in progress, clay that God continues to mold. Together we can do amazing things, even when we don't always agree. We can be grounded in God's love for us as individuals, as community, and as the world around us. God is moving through us all. May we look at our hands and see God at work through them this month. May we also see God at work in others in our community and beyond, knowing that God is continually working in and thru us all to proclaim God's love to the world.

Peace in the Spirit that moves us,

Pastor Zach

Pastor Zach

From your Church Council

The church council's monthly meetings include devotions, sharing of God sightings and concerns, approval of all staff, committee, Hmong congregation and financial reports as well as the Council Covenant Review. The council discusses any new or old business of the church. The complete council minutes from each meeting are available and can be viewed upon request.

Because the majority of the topics discussed at the council meetings already appear in the newsletter, our council update moving forward will focus on Pastor Zach's **Mission and Vision Project**, focusing on developing and planning a more deliberate plan for shared participation in the mission of our church.

Pastor Zach's continuing **Mission and Vision Project** discussion included the presentation of a plan on how to move forward to fulfill our mission statement "Come, to know the Love of God: Go, and Make it Known". The 3 phases of this plan include: Invite/Inform, Engage/Equip and Send/Share.

(continued on next page)

- ♦ **Invite Inform** - How do we share God, our mission, and God's love with those whom we know and those whom we don't know? How do we tell them what is going on and how they can be personally (directly) involved.
- ♦ **Engage Equip** - those that are here and those that have answered the invitation and received the information now need to be engaged in that ministry and equipped to serve. How do we use our mission statement to do just that? How do we get people connected in community (both onsite and online) and accompany them in their faith journey/ leadership/growth?
- ♦ **Send Share** - Once they are equipped, they need to move beyond. As our mission statement says, we "Go, to make it known". In that sending, how do we encourage those who are equipped and engaged to complete the cycle to Go and invite and inform new people? Sharing their stories, and lives with others? Mission trips, service projects in the community, community activities, and 'presence' in the community.

The Mission Statement will be placed in the gym, the main entry doors for the lobby and the library.

VBS AUG 18

The July VBS evening was such a hoot (or should I say "squeak") because Mitzi the piglet went missing and the children helped to find her. The theme this month on August 18, was again Who Is My Neighbor and the children know that Mitzi is forever grateful because she planned the entire evening with another wonderful puppet show and clues that the children collected as they moved through their activities. The clues that children collected led them through activities such as the neighborhood Art Gallery where they painted a watercolor masterpiece, The Jewelry Store where they did beading to make bracelets and necklaces, The Clothing Store where they made Rainbow Ribbon Wristbands, and the Ice Cream Shoppe where...well, you get the idea. When they collected all the clues, they discovered the hiding place of the treasure chest that Mitzi put together for them!! Oh what great fun this was!!

We are looking forward to starting another year of Faith Formation and many exciting activities that the children and teachers might choose to do. Peace and blessings to you all and keep yourself rooted in Christ.

Jayne

Check out the fun times (in pictures) on the next page!!



VBS AUG 18



Youth & Mission

We will need donations for our World Hunger Event in September. We are looking



for baskets to include in our raffle opportunities as well as larger items for our silent auction. If you are willing or interested in donating in any way, please contact Kristen Kelly at youthd@aelc.org. Get creative! If you have a talent you'd like to donate (such as baking a cake, or offering your babysitting services) we'd love to showcase and auction those off as well!

If you plan on donating any themed baskets or items including food, please make sure it is all non-perishable items. If the rise of the Delta variant would affect our date for the Auction, we plan on storing the donations for a later date when we can safely host our World Hunger Auction.

SAVE THE DATE

Join us here at AELC on Saturday September 25th for our World Hunger Basket Raffle and Auction! We will have a spaghetti dinner available for \$10 a meal, as well as raffle, silent auction, and auction items! All funds raised will go to supporting those experiencing hunger. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, we recognize the need in our community as well as worldwide, so this year 20% of the funds we raise will stay here in our community and 80% of those funds will go to ELCA World Hunger.

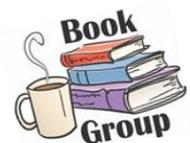


If you are heading off to college-or just heading back, please send your school address to Kristen at youthd@aelc.org! AELC wants to keep in touch while you are at school. Regardless of if its your first year, or you're going back to college-know we are lifting you up in prayer!

Calling all Senior High Youth ... I am currently working with Kristen to come up with a plan for Sr High this year. Look for more details to follow. I am excited for us to get together again soon! If you have any questions please contact Janine or Kristen.
j9labagh@gmail.com

AELC Book Club

AELC Book Club: Book Club will resume on Wednesday, **September 8** at 6:30pm! Join us at AELC to discuss our summer reading book, "The Road Back to You". If you completed the accompanying study guide, make sure to bring that will you as well as we dive into our enneagram journey!



CAT CLASS

Our first confirmation class will take place on Sunday, **September 19** at 9am. Students entering 7th grade will begin their confirmation this year.



Youth Group will resume this fall! Our first meeting date and place will be named soon!

INTERWOVEN



Our next Interwoven will take place on Sunday, **September 12**. Join us at 12:30pm at Gring's Mill. Pack your own picnic and join us for lunch and a time to share about what you did during the Big Day of Serving. After eating we will go for a short hike through Gring's Mill. We will see you there!



On Saturday August 14, AELC's Interwoven Ministry was invited to attend MinLab 2021. MinLab took place at the Lutheran Center in Allentown, PA. Kristen spent the day displaying Interwoven and sharing this ministry with all those who attended.

MinLab was a daylong event in which ministries and members of our synod were invited to come together, share their unique ministries, and help one another build their own ministry.

Those in attendance were given stickers that represent the characteristics of Growing Young, and were encouraged to discuss the ministry at each display and then give that ministry the sticker they felt embodies how our various ministries are helping our synod growing young and vital. You can check out some of the stickers Interwoven got in the picture above!

Kristen was able to interact and share our Interwoven with many churches across our synod. So many people were excited to hear about this intergenerational ministry, and asked to take this idea back to their own congregations to work on building an intergenerational ministry of their own! Bishop DeForest was so impressed he even personally made sure his previous church made time to come chat with Kristen and learn about Interwoven!

Kristen had a wonderful time sharing Interwoven with our synod. If you want to hear more about how MinLab went - don't hesitate to ask her!



Congratulations to Kaitlyn and Brendan Dougherty on the birth of their baby girl, Margo Rae Dougherty. Born on August 12, she was 7 lbs. 10 oz and 20-1/2" long. The proud grandparents are Gaye and Dennis Dougherty.



THANK YOU!

from Steven Armstrong



Dear AELC
Thank you for the gift card for amazon, I utilized it for college things. Thank you for being so supportive to me and allowing me to help with the ad. I will be back to church when I am home from college.
~~Thanks again~~
Thanks again
Steven Armstrong



Got Chocolate? We do! Come see all the delicious flavors waiting to be enjoyed at the Fair Trade stand. Equal Exchange chocolate is responsibly sourced. This may not sound like a big deal until we investigate more about where our food sources come from. Did you know that children are often exploited for the procurement of cocoa beans? Being denied an education, proper health care, and being forced to work many hours a day in the hot sun, slicing down cocoa pods with machetes, and harvesting the cocoa beans from the pods by hand. Or, that many Cocoa Bean plantation owners may make as little as \$1 a day?

This kind of information can make our chocolate consumption much less palatable. By purchasing fairly traded chocolate (or any fairly traded products), we ensure that the products we are consuming were created by paying the farmer a fair wage for their work and time, eliminating unethical practices.

So, stop by the stand and purchase a feel good bar of chocolate for yourself, and maybe for a friend. If there is a flavor you'd like to try, but we don't have, we take special requests, and will order the flavor to have for sale at the stand. For the serious chocolate lover, consider buying your chocolate by the 10 or 12 bar pack (bar count varies, depending on flavor), so you'll always have plenty on hand. Don't forget those mini bars, for times when you just want a little pick me up of deliciousness.

Enjoy, and thanks for supporting sustainable, ethical farming both here at home, and across the globe.

Janine and Connie
fairtrade@aelc.org

FOLLOW US!

Our youth have their own Instagram page. Follow us to see all the great things we do - such as Mission Trips, Interwoven, CAT class and more! Our handle is @aelc_youth! Check out all the amazing things we are doing through our faith!



Women's Group

Women's Group is finally resuming on Wednesday **September 15!** Join us at 5pm for a pot luck dinner. We will use this time to come together in community for the first time in a year. We will utilize this time to decompress from the past year, discussing how we are feeling and what we can do to continue to be in community and support of one another. We will also use this space as a time for discussion about what topics or activities we want to see Women's Group cover. A sign up sheet will be posted in the lobby.



✧ West Berks Mission District ✧
SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

The West Berks Mission District is a coalition of area Lutheran churches working together to do effective, cooperative ministry. YOU are a member of the West Berks Mission District!

The WBMD office is located in St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1015 Windsor Street, Reading PA 19604.

WBMD Director – Dawn Baxter Dawn@westberksmissiondistrict.org
Office Staff/ Bookkeeper - Jane McClellan Renner Jane@westberksmissiondistrict.org

Office Phone – 610-375-8303 Website: www.westberksmissiondistrict.org

**Reading-Berks 40th Annual
 CROP Hunger Walk
 Sunday, October 10, 2021 at 1:00 PM**

Unfortunately, we are still dealing with the pandemic but we are hoping to hold our annual CROP Walk at Gring's Mill again this year. Rather than congregating as a large group at the bridge, registration will be from 12:30-2:00 PM and your group can begin walking whenever you are ready. But, with so much uncertainty, we also want to offer the virtual Walk option again as well. So, if your group would rather Walk in a small group around your church neighborhood that would be awesome as well!

It is urgent that we find ways to engage our community to continue raising funds to fight hunger as the current pandemic creates increased need for food and resources for our local agencies and around the world. We are encouraging groups or individuals to WALK for this important cause. Walk at Gring's Mill! Walk in your neighborhood! Walk around your church! Walk in your home! Walk on October 10th or any time before then. We strongly encourage you to register online for our Reading-Berks Walk by going to www.crophungerwalk.org/readingpa and following the instructions. Encourage your sponsors to donate online as well. Please feel free to contact us if you need help!

Our annual **kick-off/fundraising event at Isaac's is scheduled for Thursday, September 9th**. Isaac's will return to us 15% of their sales that day to anyone who mentions the CROP Walk fundraiser. There are flyers that can be printed or shown on your mobile device. This includes lunch and/or dinner, eat-in, take-out and online orders with curbside pick-up. It also includes gift certificates purchased that day. We appreciate that Isaac's is willing to partner with us in this effort even in the face of very challenging times for restaurants. Please help support them and our CROP Walk by ordering food or coming to eat that day.

AGAIN... We strongly encourage walkers to register online and direct their supporters to make donations online as well but if you prefer having the printed materials and envelopes for walkers, **we will distribute materials on Thursday, September 9th from 11 AM to 7 PM outside of Isaac's**. Materials will also be available for pick-up at Helping Harvest and Trinity Lutheran in Robesonia after September 9th.