

## SUMMER INGATHERING 2024

Join us this summer in helping out a local church in their endeavors to help and support children in their community.

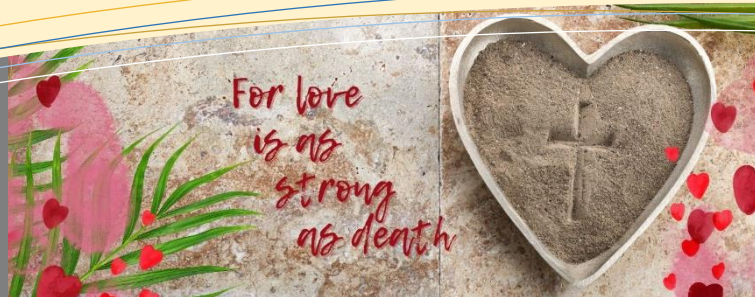
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Catasauqua runs a summer program for children in their community park. They provide a free lunch along with a connection to the local children.

We would like to collect these items to help support them with their outreach program. The items included are:

- Individual salty snack bags
- 16 oz water bottles
- Wal-Mart gift cards in \$10.00 increments

We will be collecting these items through the end of May 2024.

Please contact Pam Page at 610-360-0226 or [ppage619@gmail.com](mailto:ppage619@gmail.com) if you would like to participate or if you have any questions.



March 2024 LMD NL news will be due February 12, 2024.

Please email any information to [lmd.newslettereditor@gmail.com](mailto:lmd.newslettereditor@gmail.com)

## Deep Death to Deep Living

Dear Lehigh Mission District,

"The Dyings have been too deep for me, and before I could raise my Heart from one, another has come-" (Autumn 1884 letter from Emily Dickinson for Rebecca Mark)

My wife and I have been watching the Emily Dickinson series on Apple TV+. The TV series reminded me of the Emily Dickinson poetry I read in my college English Literature class. Emily Dickinson wrote hundreds of poems about death on pieces of papers and letters. This great American poet had an obsession with death.

Dickinson not only wrote extensively about death but she experienced the death of friends and relatives. In her lifetime the New England poet experienced the nation's mounting death count of soldiers in the American Civil War.

In our Twenty-First century, we too confront death, but we may not have the courage as Dickinson did to call it what it is. Today, death can be found with the dying of a family member or a friend, nations engaged on ethnic genocide, children dying in school shootings, the Black Lives murdered in the hands of police officers, women's rights being trampled on. While Emily may have been obsessed with death, our modern American society is plagued with unnecessary deaths that are treated in a much less serious manner.

Our church liturgical calendar calls us to celebrate Ash Wednesday. Now let's call it what it is – instead of a reminder of death, it is an initiation of death that begins with the imposition of ashes in the sign of the cross on our foreheads.

Christianity's death ritual this year falls in the calendar on Valentine's Day. I am reminded of the Song of Songs, "for love is strong as death" which combines Love and Death together.

I am not suggesting that Christianity perpetuates death rituals with the ashes to ashes and dust to dust, Good Friday, the martyrs of the faith, and a crucified Christ. Our Christian rituals may have taken us on a wrong path in society. The Christian Gnostic may have a point in not believing that Jesus did not die. Imagine for a second that Gnostic concept where Jesus lives for all eternity and never needed to die. Or for that matter, a Living Christ who calls us to Deep Living amidst the Deep Dying. The combination of the two is where I believe lies God's love for humanity through a Living Christ who died but in the process lived deeply with his disciples.

*(continued on the next page ⇨)*

## REMINDERS to the Lehigh Mission District Rostered Leaders

Please keep the following  
dates on your calendars:

February 6-7, 2024 - Bishop's  
Conference

"Finding Holy Focus in  
Hungering Times"  
at Shawnee Inn and Resort

March 13, 2024 - Wholesome  
Attitudes Toward Other  
Religions

The Rev. Dr. Roger Timm

April 10, 2024 - Collapse &  
Restructuring of the ELCA

The Rev. Thomas Busted

May 5, 2024 - LMD Spring  
Assembly 2024 at 4:00 P.M.

Lutheran Center, Allentown

June - Synod Assembly – TBD

July/August – off

Event updates will be made  
available at meetings and  
here, in the LMD Newsletter.

# CREATED TO BE

## ELCA YOUTH GATHERING New Orleans, Louisiana July 16-20, 2024

details and registration on  
[www.elca.church/gathering](http://www.elca.church/gathering)

Please contact Stacey Burke  
(Global Synod Champion)  
[stacey@nepasynod.org](mailto:stacey@nepasynod.org) or  
610-266-5101, ext. 110 with  
any questions.

**BIG INCENTIVE:** The next 5  
NEW congregations to register  
for the 2024 Gathering will get  
priority pricing – deadline is  
February 14<sup>th</sup>. Reach out to  
Stacey Burke for details.

(continued from previous page) While we live with this duality of death and life, Jesus brought about the emphasis of living life to the fullest. The Ash Wednesday ritual has been a focus on the self dying and yet ignored the dying that surrounds our world. What would it be if Ash Wednesday focused on living life amidst our deeply dying? In Emily Dickinson's words "and before I could raise my Heart from one, another has come-" We can feel a sense of deep living in our hearts amidst another dying in a part of our world. Living then is the mark of ashes on our foreheads through the one who lives.

Now I have to go and watch another episode of Emily Dickinson with my love, Jessica.

The Rev. Nelson Quiñones,  
Lehigh Mission District Dean



### OPERATION SUNSHINE

1933 Hanover Ave, Allentown, PA 18109

Phone: 610-435-9155

Open: Mon 11-3 and Wed. 11-3

Email: [LMDopsunshine@aol.com](mailto:LMDopsunshine@aol.com)

Website: [www.LMDopsunshine.com](http://www.LMDopsunshine.com)

Paula & Dick Skelly, Co-Trip Coordinators

See attached newsletter or website for details.

Operation Sunshine is a non-profit  
fellowship opportunity within our Mission  
District, run solely by volunteers.

**All trips for 2024 are currently  
SOLD OUT!!!**

If you are still interested, we encourage  
you to put your name on a wait list  
as we invariably have cancellations,  
especially this far out.



### CROP Hunger Walk: Helping Neighbors Near and Far

Thank you for helping our 2023 Greater  
Allentown CROP Hunger Walk raise over  
\$25,000 (as of 12/31/23) to help our neighbors  
in need locally and around the globe!

As a result of your faithful efforts, the Allentown  
Area Ecumenical Food Bank and Lehigh  
Conference of Churches Kitchen will each  
receive over \$3000 for their vital ministries.

And our food insecure neighbors throughout the  
United States and the world who have survived  
floods, droughts, wars, earthquakes, and other  
disasters are receiving life-saving assistance.

**By January 31, 2024, please forward any  
additional gifts you or your congregation or  
team has received for the CROP Hunger Walk  
to our CROP Treasurer, Linda Held,  
3441 Devonshire Road, Allentown PA 18103.**

If you have any photos or stories from your  
congregation's/team's CROP Hunger Walk efforts,  
please forward them to Dianne Kareha at  
[karehad@gmail.com](mailto:karehad@gmail.com) so we can post them on our  
Allentown CROP website:

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/allentownpa>

Thank you for your generosity that offers  
life-giving help to so many of our neighbors  
facing food insecurity!



**Many Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors!**

