

REMINDERS to the Lehigh Mission District Rostered Leaders

*Please keep the following
dates on your calendars:*

**April 10, 2024 - Collapse &
Restructuring of the ELCA**
The Rev. Thomas Busted

**May 5, 2024 - LMD Spring
Assembly 2024** at 4:00 PM
Lutheran Center, Allentown

**June 8, 2024 - Synod
Assembly** 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
"Hungry for Life Together in
Christ" at Atonement Lutheran
Church, Wyomissing
Register by May 10th

July/August – off

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

SUMMER INGATHERING 2024

We would like to collect the following items to help support Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Catasauqua) with their outreach program for youth in the community:
Individual salty snack bags,
16 oz water bottles, \$10.00
Wal-Mart gift cards

We will be collecting items through the end of May.

Please contact Pam Page at 610-360-0226 or ppage619@gmail.com if you would like to help or if you have any questions.



*May 2024 LMD NL news
will be due April 15, 2024.*

Please email any information to
imd.newslettereditor@gmail.com

ELCA's Annual Congregation Report & The Ethnic Question Part 1

Dear Lehigh Mission District,

"These are always hard to answer" read the fluorescent orange Post-It Note attached to the annual Congregation Report that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sends churches each year in the United States.

The church administrative assistant's note referred to items number nine and ten of the congregation report. The question is on "Race/ethnic origin." The boxed choices in the report asks the number of church participants of these categories: African American/Black, African National/African Caribbean, American Indian/Alaska Native, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic, Multiracial, White.

I fit into various categories. African Caribbean, American Indian (Indigenous), and White (Spanish European), Latino/Hispanic, and Multiracial. What can I say? I am Puerto Rican.

How do I categorize my curly-hair-white-complexed son who would show up to track and field one week wearing Puerto Rican flag running shorts and the German flag shorts the next week? It was a delight to see him fly over the hurdles. He wanted to honor his Puerto Rican Papi and German descent Mommy. Do I check the category Multiracial? Latino/Hispanic? White? He appears to feel all of the above.

This is a difficult question. Pastors across the ELCA are given the responsibility to look from their pulpit and to guesstimate what ethnic backgrounds are seated in the church pews and then place them in one of the boxes of the congregation report.

According to the report's instructions, "This is not an exact count but an informed estimate. The number should reflect the participant's self-identification of race/ethnicity origin as much as possible. "Multiracial" is provided for people of mixed race/ethnicity."

Perhaps the problem lies on this idea of race in the report. Black is not a race. White is not a race. Is Multiracial a race? Black and white are skin pigmentations. Under this understanding, my son's skin pigmentation boxes him into the "White" category. One can argue that's why there's the "Multiracial" box for him. But is this category a race or even an ethnicity?

The report gives the impression it appears that the "White" box category is for the American born Lutheran. It sounds like there's some white privilege going on for a few.

(continued on the next page ⇒)

Please support these fundraisers:

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
(1933 Hanover Ave East,
Allentown, PA 18109)

ANNUAL BASKET SOCIAL Sunday, April 7, 2024

Ticket pre-sales are going on now, in the narthex before Sunday services or stop by (or call) the church office (610-432-8762).

Buy 4 Get 1 Free - ends March 31, 2024!

All proceeds are used for outreach projects for the church and community.

See attached flyer.



Zion Lehigh Lutheran Church (8269 Spring Creek Road, Alburty, PA 18011) partnering with the Alburty Lion's Club

All You Can Eat Spaghetti Dinner 4-7 PM on Saturday, April 13, 2024

The cost is \$10.00 and includes salad, roll, dessert, coffee and water.

Any questions, please call the church 610-395-3919.



Thank you in advance for your support of these events!!!

(continued from previous page) The irony is that Lutherans in North America were German immigrants. Before the umlaut (ü) was dropped off his name and Americanized to Henry Muhlenberg, the German-born immigrant was Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg.

While the approach to race and ethnic categories on the report may be questionable, the report is about the ethnic immigrant diversity found in the Lutheran North American landscape.

Peace,
The Rev. Nelson Quiñones,
Lehigh Mission District Dean



SPRING DANCE: Saturday, May 4, 2024
Dance to the music of the Hanover Township Society for the Preservation of Big Band Sound in America from 7-10 PM.

St Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church (140 South Ott Street, Allentown)
\$15/person - all proceeds benefit Lehigh Conference of Churches.

Tickets are available at the church office (610-435-6512 x 200) or from Rick Focht (610-393-8914) See attached flyer for details.



CROP Thank You:

Thank you for helping our 2023 Greater Allentown CROP Hunger Walk raise **over \$30,000** (as of 1/31/24) 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 \$3800** for their vital ministries.

And our food insecure neighbors who have survived floods, drought, war, and other disasters are receiving life-giving assistance.

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



OPERATION SUNSHINE

1933 Hanover Ave, Allentown, PA 18109

Phone: 610-435-9155

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

Email: LMDopsunshine@aol.com

Website: www.LMDopsunshine.com

Paula & Dick Skelly, Co-Trip Coordinators

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

All single-day trips for 2024 are currently SOLD OUT!!!

We have been experiencing cancellations and encourage you to put your name on our waiting list.

Operation Sunshine is proud to announce our **2024 Multi-Day trip to the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS OF TENNESSEE.**

September 15-20, 2024

Please see the attached brochure for a complete rundown of the itinerary and costs.

Please Save These CROP Dates!

Greater Allentown **CROP Hunger Walk:**
Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024, 1:30 p.m.,
with registration beginning at 1:00 p.m.
at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, 140 S. Ott St.,
Allentown, PA 18104

Find more information about the life-saving work of Church World Service at www.crophungerwalk.org

CROP Pizza Party/Kick-off:
Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
(to receive materials, ideas, and inspiration for yourself and your congregation)
at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, 140 S. Ott St.,
Allentown, PA 18104

