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WE News of the LSS: January 16, 2026

1 message

Lower Susquehanna Synod <mroscoe@lss-elca.org>

Fri, Jan 16, 2026 at 10:10 AM

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WE ARE
Synod



THE E-NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD | January 16, 2026

**LSS Photo of the Week**

[260 participants at Winterfest 2026 took part in a food packing event in partnership with Rise Against Hunger, providing 30,000+ meals for children across the world dealing with hunger.]



2026 Congregation Remittance Reports Video

Walking Through The Updated Form with Treasurer Joe Stepansky

Lower Susquehanna Synod Treasurer Joe Stepansky explains the updated 2026 Congregation Remittance Form, offering clear instruction along with practical tips and best practices to help ensure the form is completed accurately and efficiently.

The new Treasurer's Remittance Form can be found online on the [Lower Susquehanna Synod Finance page](#), along with other resources, links of interest, and information on Mission Support.

More News From the Office of the Treasurer

Planning for Mission Support in 2026

As your congregation prepares and approves budgets and ministry plans for the coming calendar year, we invite you to prayerfully consider your Mission Support commitment for 2026. Mission Support is how we, together, live out our shared calling as the Body of Christ: strengthening congregations, nurturing leaders, supporting new ministries, and accompanying global and local partners in God's mission. Every gift makes a difference in sharing the gospel and serving our neighbors near and far. Congregations are encouraged to complete their Mission Support Plan and submit it using the 2026 fillable form.

[Learn More.](#)

Year End Reminder

Synod Council will meet on January 31, which also marks the close of the synod's fiscal year. As you are able, please work with your congregations to submit Mission Support gifts by that date. We are deeply grateful for all the ways you support our shared ministry.



**LOWER
SUSQUEHANNA
SYNOD** THIS IS CHRIST'S CHURCH.
THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU HERE.

The 2026 Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly**Synod Assembly Updates**

As we begin preparing for this year's Synod Assembly, to be held at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in York on Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6, 2026, we encourage congregations to begin identifying their lay voting members. To assist with that planning, we want to share the tentative assembly schedule: Friday, June 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday, June 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We hope this information is helpful as you consider availability and participation when selecting voting members.

Synod Council will consider the proposed rules of procedure, agenda, and registration rates at its January 31 meeting. Once action is taken on these items, additional details will be shared.

2026 Synod Assembly Edification Forums

Opportunities for voting members to learn and grow in their faith and service to Christ's Church will be included in this year's assembly. During this time, two sixty-minute forum sessions with a variety of educational options will be offered. **To be considered, please complete the forum proposal form by Friday, February 6, 2026.** We are grateful for the many ways leaders across our synod are willing to share their gifts, wisdom, and passions, and we look forward to learning together. [Fill out the proposal form here.](#)

2025 Synod Assembly Voting Members' Invitation to Serve on a Short-Term Task Force to Review Bishop Election Procedures

As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening our shared life together, and in light of several new election processes implemented for the first time, Synod Council is inviting voting members of the 2025 Synod Assembly to consider serving on a short-term task force to prayerfully review specific aspects of the Rules of Procedure for the Election of a Bishop. The task force will meet approximately three times by Zoom and will be appointed at the January 31, 2026, Synod Council meeting. We will seek a diversity of voices and experiences. Those interested are asked to respond by January 23, 2026. [Fill out the interest form here.](#)

Is God Calling You To Serve?

Our synod celebrates the diverse gifts of its members and asks that members consider sharing those gifts in leadership roles in this church. The synod Nominating Committee, comprised of one member of each conference and two members of the Synod Council, is seeking volunteers who are willing to be nominated for election to the Synod Council and to the Susquehanna University Board. We need your help to identify possible nominees. Share this information with members of your congregation! [Visit our nominations webpage](#), or [contact Pastor Susan Scott](#), chair of the Nominating Committee. To seek nomination, please complete the nomination form and return it to dclark@lss-elca.org or mail to 1959 Market Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011.



Administrative Office Assistant Position Now Open

With Marty Shifflett's and Cathy Paul's retirements, we are now accepting applications for a full-time Administrative Office Assistant. This position provides essential administrative and organizational support for the life and work of our synod. [A full position description is included here.](#) Interested candidates are invited to submit a resume, cover letter, and references to Debbie Clark at dclark@lss-elca.org. We welcome your prayers and your help in sharing this opportunity.



**The Lutheran Camping Corporation
of Central Pennsylvania**
Kirchenwald, Nawakwa, & The Wittel Farm

The Lutheran Camping Corporation Appoints Interim Executive Director

The Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania is pleased to announce the hire of Richard (Dick) Peterson as the Interim Executive Director. Dick brings decades of experience in Lutheran outdoor ministry and nonprofit leadership. He brings extensive experience in staff and volunteer development, fundraising, public relations, and program leadership. A gifted communicator and mentor, he has spent more than 35 years inspiring staff, volunteers, and constituents through presentations, training, and relationship-building. Above all, he understands camps not simply as programs, but as sacred places where faith is formed, leaders are shaped, and lives are changed.

This moment marks an opportunity to stabilize, strengthen, and imagine faithfully what God is calling the Lutheran Camping Corporation to be in the years ahead. With your continued prayers and partnership, this ministry will continue to thrive and bless generations to come.

[**Learn More.**](#)

January 2026 Justice Resource Blog



Justice Ministry Resources & Events

2026 National Day of Racial Healing

The ELCA, in partnership with Augsburg Fortress, will observe the 2026 National Day of Racial Healing with a free evening online program on Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET, themed "Just Us Narratives: A Night of Centering Multiracial Voices Across the ELCA."

[Learn More.](#)

Justice Resource Blog

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Learn ways our congregations and those in our community and beyond can begin to put an end to human trafficking through various ELCA programs and partner organizations and initiatives.

[Learn More.](#)



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sunday, January 18 - Sunday, January 25

Each year Christians around the world are invited to join in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year's resources, prepared by the Armenian Apostolic Church in partnership with ecumenical partners, center on the theme from Ephesians 4:4: **"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling."** These materials include prayers, reflections, and service outlines designed to help congregations, small groups, and individuals deepen their commitment to Christ's call to unity. We encourage you to explore these resources and participate in prayer for Christian unity in your own context.

[Learn More.](#)



Be the First Hello

Volunteers Needed for Horizons Transitional Housing

LHM Foundation's Horizons transitional housing ministry began welcoming individuals and families who are transitioning out of homelessness in the Harrisburg area earlier this week. This new ministry provides stability, community, and supportive services designed to help people take steps toward lasting housing security and a brighter future.

You're invited to be part of this meaningful ministry! LHM Foundation is looking for **front desk/reception volunteers** to be the warm first "hello" for program participants and help support the daily life of the Horizons community. Three-hour shifts are available all day from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., so there are ways to serve that fit a variety of schedules. Please contact Mel Cronin with any questions (mel.cronin@lhm-foundation.org) or [Click here to sign-up today.](#)

**ULS Kindling Faith
Training
Opportunities**

**LGBTQIA2S+/
Racial Justice/
Boundary Trainings**



United Lutheran Seminary
Kindling Faith
Learning Never Ends

Kindling Faith 2026 Training Opportunities

LGBTQIA2S+/Racial Justice/Boundary Training Opportunities

LGBTQIA2S+ Training

- February 2 & 3, online, 6:00–8:30 p.m. (one training, two nights)
- February 17, Gettysburg Campus in person, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
- March 10, online, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Toward Racial Justice Training

- February 9 & 10, online, 6:00–8:30 p.m. (one training, two nights)
- February 19, Gettysburg Campus in person, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
- March 11, online, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Boundary Training

- February 24, Gettysburg Campus in person, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
- March 2 & 3, online, 6:00–8:30 p.m. (one training, two nights)

- March 12, online, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

These trainings fulfill requirements for rostered ministers according to ELCA guidelines.

[Learn More & Register.](#)



LAMPa Isaiah 58:12 Fellowship

Empowering Lutheran Youth in Pennsylvania for Racial Reconciliation

Youth and young adults can apply for a grant of up to \$500 for projects in their congregation or community to further racial justice and reconciliation and a \$1,000 scholarship upon successful completion of the project.

Building on the prophet Isaiah's vision of those who "will be called repairer of the breach, restorer of the streets to live in," this fellowship empowers recipients to address racial injustice and enact reconciliation at the grassroots level. Up to 3 fellowships will be awarded each year.

- Each recipient is paired with a clergy person of color to serve as mentor to bring the project to fruition.
- Monthly check-ins with mentors and LAMPa staff, and participation in antiracism training are required parts of the fellowship.
- Fellows will present on their project and fellowship experience at Lutheran Day 2026 (April 21, 2026).
- Fellows who successfully complete their projects will then receive \$1,000 for college tuition or continuing education.

[Learn More.](#)

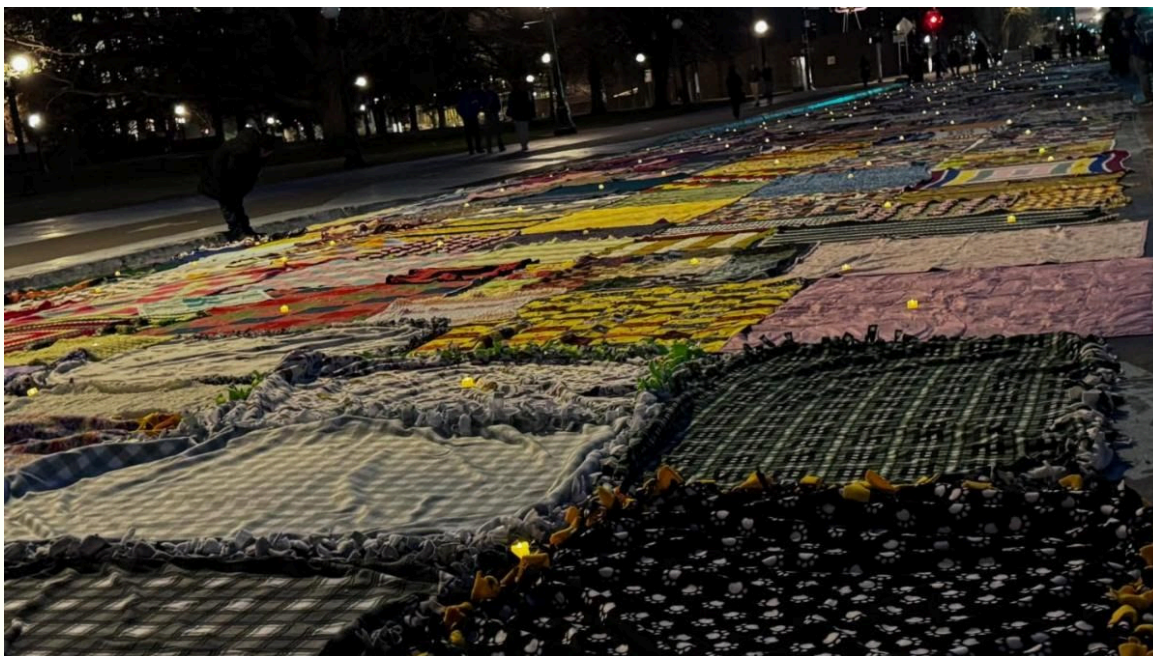


Better Together Winterfest 2026

Winterfest 2026: Better Together Recap

What does it mean to be *Better Together*, to be united by our common bond as beloved children of God, gathered around our Lord's table and sent into the world as one body in Christ? For more than 260 high school youth, young adults, and congregation advisors from over 35 congregations who gathered for Winterfest 2026, they spent the first weekend in January answering just that question. Under the theme of *Better Together*, participants explored the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of beloved community, reflected on what it means to belong to one another in Christ, and how to put our faith into action. Winterfest-goers had a chance to live out the promise of *Better Together* through a food-packing project held during the event, packing over 30,000 meals in partnership with Rise Against Hunger.

Learn more about Ministry with Youth and Young Adults in the Lower Susquehanna Synod.



Wrapped in Love

A Thank You to Our Blanket Makers

Thank you to all of our congregations and individuals who lovingly and thoughtfully made blankets for the December 21 Homeless Memorial Blanket Initiative. This year marked our fifth year participating in and supporting the Homeless Memorial Blanket Initiative, and it is clear that this is and always will be more than a single annual day. It has become a movement. A witness. A collective refusal to forget those whom the world too often overlooks.

Each blanket you knit, crocheted, stitched, tied, and prayed over became part of something much bigger than fabric and thread. Your blankets traveled to Denver, Colorado, offering warmth to bodies and to hearts to say clearly and compassionately: *you are seen, you are remembered, you matter.*

On the longest night of the year, the day culminated in Denver's "We Will Remember" Homeless Vigil, where 274 lives lost to homelessness were named and honored. As reported by *The Denver Voice*, the vigil gathered community members in candlelight and prayer, holding sacred space for grief, dignity, and remembrance with each name spoken aloud, each life honored as beloved.

Your blankets were part of that holy witness, surrounding the vigil with tangible care and compassion. Thank you for showing up with your hands, your time, your prayers, and your love. Thank you for helping us remember. Thank you for helping us bear hope into the cold.

And this movement continues. We invite you to keep the blankets coming, because next year our blankets will travel to New York, where they will once

again wrap remembrance, dignity, and compassion around lives too often forgotten.



Updates From Across the Synod

ELCA Annual Report Cover

The ELCA provides a cover for annual reports that many congregations find helpful. Included is a message from Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, an opening liturgy for annual meetings, and a thank you for the generosity that supports the mission of the ELCA. [Download the cover pages here.](#)

Synod Office Closure

Please note our synod office will be closed to observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 19, 2026. Our office will reopen on Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

Installation of The Rev. Debbie Mahady

The Rev. Debbie Mahady will be installed as pastor for Mount Zion Lutheran Church, [2164 Mount Zion Road, York](#), on Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. All are invited to attend. Clergy are invited to vest. The color of the day is green. There will be sweets and drinks following the installation.



In the News

Union Lutheran Church, York, was featured in the *York Dispatch* as they held a community vigil for unhoused people who died last year in York.

[Read More.](#)



We Pray Together

We are a synod that prays together and for one another. Be sure to visit our website prayer page each week.

[Prayer Lists.](#)

EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, & UPDATES FROM OUR MISSION PARTNERS

Woven Together: ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering**July 6-9, 2026**

All ELCA deacons, pastors and bishops (under call, on leave or disability, or retired) and candidates approved for call are invited to a time of intentional connection when we can renew our strength, enjoy camaraderie with colleagues and reflect on the Holy Spirit's work among us.

We will gather under the theme "Woven Together" and center ourselves each day on a thread of that theme:

- "Woven Together With God."
- "Woven Together for Creation."
- "Woven Together as Community."
- "Rostered Ministers Woven Together."

Registration is open now! The registration fee includes access to plenary sessions with keynote speakers, small-group discussions, affinity groups, workshops and all activities in the Interaction Center, as well as Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry's opening reception on Monday evening, Tuesday and Wednesday lunch and the Celebration Banquet on Wednesday evening.

[Learn More & Register.](#)

Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic**Annual Program and Meeting**

Sponsored by the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic, an Archives Workshop Weekend will be held at United Lutheran Seminary on the Gettysburg Campus. Friday, February 27, will be an Archives Workshop Day. On Saturday, February 28, sessions will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will include presentations by Victoria Larson on *Lutheran Laywoman Maude McDaniel*, Daniel Smail on *William Passavant*, and Victoria Jesswein on *Digital Access to Archives*. Boxed lunches will be provided. Lunch and room registrations will open later in January. Visit www.lutheranhistoricalsociety.com for updates on registration.

Study Guide Available For New Faith and Civic Life Social Statement

LAMPa is delighted to offer for congregational use a curriculum to help study and understand the ELCA social statement, [Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All](#). This six-week curriculum (perfect for Lent!) walks congregations and faith communities through important parts of the social statement and offers a starting point for conversation and

discernment around relevant topics for our time. [Explore and download here.](#)

WE ARE SYNOD, the e-newsletter of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, connects and shares news and events highlighting the mission and ministry of congregations, our synod, and the ELCA. If you have an idea or a story to share, a prayer concern, or an event or job posting you'd like to advertise on our website, please submit using the our [Community Submissions Form](#).

NEW! We plan to feature photos from a variety of photographers, congregations, and ministries for the **LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD PHOTO OF THE WEEK**. Have a photo to submit? Submissions (1200 X 400) can be uploaded to our [Community Submissions Form](#). By submitting a photo, you are giving the Lower Susquehanna Synod permission to use that photo in promotional materials.

For more detailed information about what's happening around our synod, [VISIT LSS-ELCA.ORG](#).

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