

# ◆ SYNOD NEWS ◆

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

January 2012



## Be Who You Are! See What You Have! DO WHAT MATTERS!

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod congregations are discovering where God is on the move!

On four days in November, a total of 68 congregations participated in the follow-up to the first round of *Do What Matters* workshops. Led by Kelly Fryer and Tana Kjos of “A Renewal Enterprise,” these workshops helped us open ourselves to working in renewable ways in a world that’s changing more rapidly than we can imagine.



At the heart of a renewable approach are these three principles:

**Be who you are. See what you have. Do what matters.**

Participants in the workshops were given a congregational toolkit to help them look at who they are, what they have, and how they can do what matters. There are five parts to this toolkit:



1. A guide for reading the Book of Acts together (as a congregation council, church committee, or possibly as an entire congregation!)
2. A fun way for people in congregations to practice paying attention to what God is up to in their everyday lives – at home, work, school.
3. An idea for getting congregational members to join in with what God is doing in the community and through their neighbors, and to

partner with other organizations to do what matters to God.



4. A challenge to STOP doing something in congregational life that has stopped being fun or effective – something that is “sucking the life out of you.”
5. A challenge exercise – a suggestion of a new way of “doing business” – letting God set the agenda for your congregation.

At the November events, congregations began working on these five tools and shared some of their hopes. The synod staff is digging into this, too. The entire staff has begun to study the Book of Acts together and staff meetings are devoted to sharing places where God is on the move. They are starting to look at places where they can partner with other organizations to do more effective ministry.



If your congregation did not receive a copy of this toolkit or you want a copy for yourself, click the link on the synod website, [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org), to download a copy. And **please** share your stories of how God is on the move in this renewable way of doing ministry so that we can learn from one another and celebrate the ministry that is being done through you! Send your stories to synod vice president Dawn Baxter at [dawn@westberksmissiondistrict.org](mailto:dawn@westberksmissiondistrict.org) or West Berks Mission District, 1015 Windsor St., Reading, PA 19604-2358.

**2012 Synod Assembly**  
**June 15-16, Sovereign Center,**  
**Reading PA.**





**Family Faith Challenge**

Families come in all shapes and sizes. *Family* means different things to different people. Keeping this in mind, the synod’s Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry Team is developing monthly “Family Faith Challenges.” Whether you are single, married, divorced, someone’s grandparent, someone’s child, someone’s relative – you are a member of God’s family.

Take part in these monthly family faith challenges with other member of your family. (For those who are single, invite a friend to walk with you on your faith journey!)

**Family faith challenge guidelines for the year:**

- Worship God together once a week
- Gather together around a table six times a week
- Have an empty chair at the table to represent God’s presence
- Make sure each person has his/her time to speak without interruption
- Read from an age-appropriate Bible



**Here are January’s challenges, *Glimpses of God*.** We challenge you to notice God’s presence/movement in the world around you.



**Week one:** Go outside at night and look at the stars. Talk about how stars guided the wise men to see Jesus. How many stars can you see? Think about how big God’s creation is.

**Week two:** Gather around a table and turn out all the lights in your house. Light one candle and talk about where you saw God this week.

**Week three:** Go outside and walk around your neighborhood. Look for signs of God’s creation in the air and on the land. Do you see any animals or plants?



**2012 Learning Ministries Day**

**Saturday, January 28, 2012**

***Faith Formation 2020: Making and Teaching Disciples in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

**Keynote presenter: John Roberto**, author and founder of Lifelong Faith Associates

**Location:** Faith Lutheran Church, Whitehall

**Cost:** \$25

More information may be found on the synod website, [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org).

**Farm Family Appreciation Celebration**

**Saturday, March 17, 2012**

Come celebrate the annual farm family appreciation celebration with friends and families across the synod.



For more information or to register, call 610-378-1327 and ask for Donna or go to [www.godslove.org/calendar](http://www.godslove.org/calendar).

***Kindness and Compassion***

Northeastern PA Synod Women of the ELCA Spiritual Growth Retreat



**March 17, 2012** (snow date, March 24)  
Nativity Lutheran Church, Allentown

Guest: Bruce Becker, author of *Kindness and Compassion*, the story of the Nickel Mine tragedy.

Registration-\$20.00 (includes lunch)

For more information and to register, see the December *Flame* at [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org).

**Week four:** Gather around a mirror. Look in the mirror! You are one of God’s amazing creations. Talk about how God is working in your life, your family’s life, your church family’s life. What unique gifts and talents has God given you?