

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Well Drilling in Honduras

A well drilling trip to Honduras was life changing to the team from Trinity, Wernersville, as it also was to the wonderful people of Teguajal, Honduras. Although the village was small, over 200 children came to the school where the team installed the well.

Before this well was drilled, the entire village's source of drinking water came from a polluted stream. Because of the very steep banks, water had to be pumped up out of the stream.



The team saw Jesus at work many times that week. The group they worked with from Honduras did not have technology to find the best place to drill, so they used a simple but powerful form of prayer to decide on a drilling location; and Jesus provided.

The team formed many relationships with the children and teachers, and they left the village the on final day with many tears, hugs, and memories to last a life time. Trinity is truly thankful for the generous \$6,000 grant from the synod Witness and Service Ministry Team, funded from your Mission Support giving.

Alyra Parker - Muraho from Rwanda



"Over these past two months my faith has been tested more than ever," writes Alyra Parker (Hope, Reading) in her blog *Muraho from Rwanda*. Alyra (a former LYF Vice President) is a junior at Gettysburg College. She is in Kigali, Rwanda for a spring semester to study the Post Genocide Restoration and Peacebuilding program.

One of many experiences that have had an impact on Alyra was a visit to a burial site that is dedicated to children killed in the genocide. "There were pictures of children with captions that included their favorite color, their favorite things to do." In addition, there was information about how each child was killed.

"With peace building and reconciliation, I've noticed the capacity for forgiveness from Rwandans. After the genocide, President Kagame (a Tutsi) decided he did not want to pursue revenge on the Hutu's for the genocide, but rather wanted to reconcile and work together to redeem and rebuild Rwanda.

"This concept has been hard to grasp coming from the US. We focus so much on reparations, that a concept like the one President Kagame has pursued would never be worked out in the US. Learning about this has helped me to reflect on the capacity of forgiveness in my own life and in the lives of others."

Follow Alyra's blog to learn more about her experiences: <https://murahofromrwanda.wordpress.com>.

Always Being Made New Campaign for the ELCA

We've all heard it said, "You will never know unless you try." So, back in 2013, the Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly decided to "try" launching a five-year comprehensive campaign with four key priorities:

1. Congregations - new and renewing, and people living with disabilities
2. Hunger and poverty - ELCA World Hunger and the ELCA Malaria Campaign
3. Global Church - long-term missionaries, Young Adults in Global Mission, Global Ministries and International Women Leaders
4. Leadership - Fund for Leaders, along with Youth and Young Adults

The Campaign has run for 36 months now, and the leaders are very pleased with the progress made to date. As of Jan. 31, 2017 \$113 million dollars in cash and commitments has been received (57.3 percent of the goal).

The ELCA is very grateful for the offerings that have come forward as a

result of "trying" this new thing. Just imagine what more can be done as we continue to grow in supporting the people, communities and projects that are a priority for us.

To donate, visit www.elca.org and click on the "Campaign for the ELCA" button.



Center for Spiritual Awakening at Christ, Allentown



In February, 2015, on the drive back to Allentown from a two-day conference about people who identify as "spiritual but not religious," Pastors Tom Lichner and Woody Maxon birthed the vision of a place that would offer safe space, resources, and programming for folks to search their spiritual identity, regardless of their connection to any particular faith community.

This was the beginning of what is now called the Center for Spiritual Awakening, which has found a home in Christ Lutheran's newly renovated, at-one-time parsonage, next to the church building.

- Vision - To awaken and reawaken the awareness of people to the spirit of God in and around them everyday.
- Mission - To provide supportive programs, resources, and safe space for people to search their spiritual identity and relationship with God in order to live to their truest and fullest potential.

The Center recognizes that some people are closely aligned with a traditional faith group; but others are not and seek to satisfy their spiritual hunger through new and different ways of exploration. The Center realizes that spirituality is a way of life and not just a set of creeds and doctrines to adhere to.

To this end the Center offers one-on-one and group spiritual guidance, guided prayer retreats, discussion groups, contemplative worship, and various kinds of programs at the Center and other Lehigh Valley locations. The Center's diverse array of offerings and resources can be viewed on its webpage at the Christ Lutheran Church website: www.christ-atown.org.

The Center's Director is the Rev. Dr. Tom Lichner. Tom was a clinical member of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors for ten years and he has been certified by two institutions and been practicing as a Spiritual Director since 1989.

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