



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church



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Blessing and Prayers for

Upstate New York Bishop Elect Rev. Lee Miller, II

Here is an excerpt from the bishop elect’s candidate bio. Please continue to pray for him and for our Synod.

Statement of your faith journey:

“Why?” is the first question I remember asking as a child. Why? “Why do we go to church every Sunday?” Baptized into Christ’ body at First Lutheran Church in Jamestown, NY, raised by surrogate grandmothers at First English in Lockport, and taught by faithful teachers at St. Stephen’s in Syracuse, I learned the answer to my first “why’s?”. “Because, Jesus loves you,” was the response. God loves you, God loves the whole world, all God’s people, no exceptions. “God Loves You” was my first working definition for the Gospel.

During college in Albany, I stepped back from congregational life; my faith questions had changed. Now my question was “where is God?” In those days, God sought me out, gathered me into the community at Holy

Spirit in Albany. There, among the faithful congregation I was reminded, “God is here.” God is with us. This became my next understanding of what the Gospel means. God loves you. God is here!

Today, my questions have changed again. What’s next? Now that we have been saved by grace through faith, what’s next? If God did die on the cross so that all people might live abundantly, what’s next? If God’s goal is that the whole cosmos would know God’s love, what’s next? I have been meditating on Paul’s definition of the gospel in Romans “It is the power of God for salvation” (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel is the power of God at work in the world for salvation, for liberation. How awesome is that?!

We, the baptized, have been reminded again and again of God’s love for us, we have proclaimed God’s presence, God’s power to show up and transform the lives of individuals, communities, and the world, and we believe that the good news is the power of God at work in the world (today!) for salva-

tion. Thanks be to God! What’s next?

Statement of vision for the Synod

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, called and commissioned as followers of Jesus, and reconciled to God, creator and reformer of all life, the role of the synod in my view is to: raise up, equip and support healthy leaders. To cultivate and empower vibrant ministries; and to coordinate, connect and encourage partnerships within the Synod, Churchwide, and global Body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

I vision a synod which takes on the very real challenges we face together as a church with a creative spirit of adventure. It may be that we are more akin to the church of the first few centuries after Christ, than the last few centuries when the church has been at the center of culture. I vision a church where adaptive leadership is a requirement – acknowledging the fear of loss, taking time to listen and learn, and being collectively creative in forming the new things God has in store. I vision a synod



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Faith In Action

TriniKnits: We are placing our knit, crocheted and purchased hats, gloves, mittens and scarves at different locations for our homeless brothers and sisters. Our total this year is 91 items donated! Thank you to everyone who was able to Contribute. If you have any questions about this ministry and how you can help, please see Barb Seegar.



Gerard Place Soup Kitchen: Friends of Night People provide take-out meals. Currently, we are supplying 2 volunteers on the 4th Wednesday of each month to distribute meals prepared by Friends of the Night People. Let Kathy Back know if you wish to become a volunteer. The time commitment is from 3:30 to 6 pm. Masks and caps/hats are mandatory. **Gerard Place is starting up a new food pantry!** Trinity's upcoming food collections will be donated to them to help get their pantry up and running. They are looking for volunteers to work the pantry. There are set times available. Anyone interested should contact Kathy Zuppa at Gerard Place.



GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS 2021: This year will include multiple activities. In conjunction with Mother's Day and Father's Day, we will partner with *Sleep in Heavenly Peace*, an organization dedicated to providing beds for children. The local chapter is in the Eastern Hills Mall. We will collect new twin sized bedding in May and June. (Please put any donations in the collection bin in the narthex.) On Saturday, 9/11/21, Trinity will participate in a bed building event beginning at 9 AM for 3-4 hours. A volunteer sign-up sheet will be posted as we get closer to the event.



Collections: There are containers on the table in the narthex for the following: **Ronald McDonald House** (can tabs), **Wands for Wildlife** (clean, used mascara wands), and **Dash's Markets** (receipts). We continue to collect both 2020 and 2021 receipts. **Hearts for the Homeless:** Collecting clothing in the red box in the parking lot.

AmazonSmile: If you shop Amazon, consider doing so through Amazon Smile indicating that you are supporting Trinity as the church will receive 0.5% of eligible purchases. 1) Log into smile.amazon.com 2) Enter sign-in info or create an account. 3) At the top of the next screen under the search box, there is a place to select the charity one wishes to support. Type "Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church". Select the one that says "East Amherst, NY" 4) Shop online.



\$17.95 was donated from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of program activity between January 1 and March 31, 2021. Contact Kathy Back with any questions.

Thank you very much for all you do to show and share Jesus' love!

Lutheran Charities of WNY Drive-thru BBQ



Summer BBQ with Buffalo's favorite
Chiavetta's Chicken
to benefit Lutheran Charities of WNY

Join us for our Drive-Thru Chicken BBQ!

**Wednesday, June 23rd
4pm to 7pm or sold out**

June 23, 2021, 4:00 PM
St. John Lutheran Church
6540 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221
716-683-8972



Bishop Elect Rev. Lee Miller's Bio Excerpt (continued from page 1)

where partnerships are essential (Romans 12:4-5) – not only congregational cooperation but religious and secular partnerships, ministry with non-profits, community organizations, schools, food pantries, ecumenical and inter-faith organizations, religious and private partnerships. I vision a church where together we work towards dismantling sexism, racism, ableism, bigotry, and a white supremacist worldview as a part of our baptismal response to “reject sin and renounce all the forces of evil” of our world. I vision a synod where this work is not a “program” of the church, but is core to our culture, the DNA of our church, an essential part of how we live out our salvation. I vision a synod which will look different in five years, in ways we do not yet know, but I vision a church to which God is faithful, and which has the gifts and power to change our world with God’s amazing love.

Other information you consider important to share with us:

This past week marked one-year since the pandemic exploded in our nation and our gathered community dispersed into a wilderness of physically-distanced, face-covered, appearances, and digital gatherings of God’s faithful people. Through these once-unimaginable days, we have grieved so much, and for so many. We have also found new ways to love one another, our neighbors, those in need, and even ourselves, as God loves us. I look forward to when we will be able to gather together soon both to remember and give thanks for those who have died, and to celebrate and give thanks for God’s presence through tremendous times. We have learned a lot as church in this time, just as everyone has learned so much. We have been reminded that some meetings really can be an

email (or a phone call) and some phone calls are made brighter with faces on a screen. We have been reminded that each one of us is a member of the church, and together we have the power to impact the world, make change for the sake of our neighbors, and stand alongside siblings who cry out for justice. We have been held together by a loving and sustaining God. We have not lost hope. We have not let go of faith. We have not closed. Rather the Holy Spirit has bound us together and re-formed us, in real and variant ways. How will we adapt our thinking, our strategies, our ministries to navigate the uncharted terrain that is before us? I expect we will use all of our God-given, Jesus-led, Spirit-driven gifts to show God’s love to the world. I believe that to do all that the Holy Spirit is inspiring us to do requires us to be as healthy as we can be, as individuals, communities and church together. It has been my goal during the pandemic to take 30-minutes each day for self-care in the form of exercise. I love to run, but everybody enjoys their own thing. Caring for our physical and mental health is important for each one of us. If I were to be elected Bishop, I might ask you, “what are you doing for yourself?” as an encouragement to take time for self-care, and even for having a little bit of fun along the way. Healthy individuals, forming healthy congregations and communities, form a healthy synod, where each part of the body continues to grow. Thanks be to God!



June Mission Message from Marcia Brown: Peace Not Walls

...is the name of the branch of the ELCA Advocacy ministry that works for justice and peace in Palestine and Israel. In the news lately, you have undoubtedly seen the renewal of hostilities between the two. Regardless where your sympathies lie, the ELCA accompanies both to promote respect for human rights, reconciliation, and peace. ELCA’s primary companion in this work is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and the two church bodies are members of the Lutheran World Federation.

In recent weeks, the Israeli government has made plans to remove Palestinians from their own homes in East Jerusalem so Israelis can live there. Even though Israel has made very positive progress on COVID vaccinations, very few Palestinians have had the opportunity to get it, and COVID deaths in Gaza and the West Bank have been disproportionately high. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Israeli security forces impeded access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and even attacked worshippers.

Rockets have destroyed entire neighborhoods in Gaza, while Israel’s sophisticated defense system prevents most of the damage from Palestinian weapons. These events are in addition to the decades-long military incursions, restrictions on movement, limited access to worship, health care, education, farmland, and clean water. Of course, there has been damage and death on the Israel side too, but significantly less.

ELCA Advocacy brings these situations to light so that we can express our concern to our elected officials, so that we can pray for solutions, so that we can knowledgeably discuss the issues. Peace Not Walls exists because of your mission support. *Thank you!*

We are church together
for the sake of the world.

God’s Work. Our Hands.



Lifelines for Guys Like Us

Project XII Bible Study Guides Offer Roadmap For Spiritual Growth

by Vic Williams for *Lutheran Men in Mission*, Spring 2021

From *Lutheran Men in Mission*, Spring 2021

We've had just about enough, haven't we, guys?
 Enough Zoom.
 Enough doom and gloom.
 Enough streaming.
 Enough dreaming of the Way It Used to Be.
 Enough keeping in touch with no touch at all, by phone or text or whatever.
 Enough being in the bubble and out of loop and, all too often, out of answers for ourselves and each other.
 Enough going it alone.
 Just plain ... enough.

We're not out of the Covid-19 woods, not even close, but things are looking up. America has passed the 200 million vaccination mark. Gathering places, both indoors and out—including churches—are reopening for groups of more than four, which means whatever small groups we might have been part of in pre-pan-demic days can, God willing (and He is), reconvene for real—perhaps virtually in the short term, but in person very soon.

Which makes the introduction of Lifelines, a new small group Bible study series rolling out on www.ProjectTwelve.net over the next six months, so timely, so needed, and so key to helping small “cell groups” of five to a dozen guys build strong and deep spiritual bonds.

The Lifelines effort marks an extensive update of lessons included in the Master Builder Bible for Men, the Lutheran Men in Mission version of the Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study (4th edition). It comprises six, 6-session study guides—36 in all—that tie time-less masculine themes to Bible passages. The first set of six, “Real Man Lifelines,” went live on May 1, with the other five sets—Dependable Man, Faithful Man, Challenged Man, Working Man, and Growing Man—to follow every six weeks through the end of 2021.

The Lifelines project brings Scripture alive... it gives guys the nod to put God, and Jesus, at the center of every group encounter, online or in person.

Written by 13 men from five denominations involved with Project Twelve, the lesson plans are “Christ-centered conversations dealing with issues critical to men,” says former LMM Executive Director Doug Haugen, himself one of the writers (as was I). “They are meant to be done wherever friends meet—brew pubs, coffee shops, campfires.”

The Lifelines project germinated in Haugen's mind for years. He worked with original Serendipity Bible editor Lyman Coleman to publish the Master Builder's Bible, and knew that the lessons included in that printed product needed a spruce-up for today's digital environment. “Since the advent of personal media, it has been my dream to put Serendipity-style conversation starters/Bible studies into the hands of men. I wanted to see something that men could use with their phones so that it was literally at their fingertips wherever they may be.”

The Lifelines conversation began in September 2019, when Wisconsin-based pastor Dietrich Gruen, who had also been Coleman's executive editor at Serendipity House and was among the Serendipity Bible's first-edition editors, phoned LMM Executive Director John Sundquist about various subjects. The idea of producing a new Bible study project came up, and in subsequent e-mails, Gruen offered his services. Months passed as the coronavirus pandemic took root around the world, but by the fall of 2020, Sundquist reconnected Gruen with Haugen, while another editor, Daryl Smith, came on board at Coleman's recommendation. The partnership that became Lifelines was finally in place.

“We thought it might be easiest to touch up the ‘Beginner’ sections of the 36 Men's ‘For Lite Study’ Courses in the original Bible,” Haugen said. “We ended up doing a complete rewrite.”

To streamline the writing process, the team recruited contributors who had been involved with the development of the Project XII website in some way, and likely had experience with small group ministry. As one of those writers, I worked with Gruen, in particular, to hone my five study session entries into form—tweaking the questions' focus, tone and word choices to be as approachable and casual as possible, in keeping with Haugen's goal of not getting to “churchy.” I learned a lot along the way. I'm sure other guys did, too.

Continued on next page

Lifelines for Guys Like Us

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Each study guide's questionnaires follow a set plan based on the Bible passage at hand—for instance, Matthew 20:1-17, Jesus' parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, which was one of my subjects. After a gathering/icebreaker question—sometimes multiple choice, sometimes a more open-ended inquiry—is a Backstory to set the scene and put the passage into contemporary context, a big help for unchurched guys or those less familiar with the Bible. Then the passage is read aloud by one member of the group (“God’s Story”), and discussion follows with two to four questions under two main headings—“Finding My Story in God’s Story” (putting one’s self right into the narrative) and “Our Story” (applying the lesson to real life, answering a call to action, and a call for prayer for each other). This God-to-man-to-community arc is consistent through each lesson, which should take no more than 75 minutes.

A detailed guide for group leaders is available on the Project Twelve site, as well.

The Lifelines project brings Scripture alive for today's searching, yearning, sometimes troubled, sometimes joyous man, of any generation. It employs the Word as conversational spark and spiritual challenge. And, as the world finally sees the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, it gives guys the nod to put God, and Jesus, at the center of every group encounter, online or in person. Let's pray it's the latter, very soon.

Follow www.ProjectTwelve.net as the study guide sessions roll out. And be sure to invite other men to join along.



OLD AND NEW

Chris Heavner, Clemson, SC for FaithLens from elca.org, 5/23/21

Warm-up Questions:

If a room is already full, how can more people get in?

What to make of the saying, “Good endings make possible great beginnings”?

My high school adopted a mascot many of us attending that school found to be insensitive, if not downright offensive. In 1962, when the school was established, we had not yet learned to listen to the voices of those whose experiences did not match those of the loud and boisterous. It was difficult to speak of what we wanted to be and become, when we were continually reminded of the comfort the status quo brought most of our classmates. While we all like the idea of something new and different, it is never easy to let go of what we know so well. “If it ain't broke; don't fix it!” expresses our reluctance to make way for what is yet to come.

It doesn't take long for us to fall into a comfortable routine. The 12th graders at our annual Synod Youth Retreat are celebrated in rituals which they strengthen by their participation as 10th and 11th graders. How dare we make changes when it is THEIR year to be in a unique small group of their own! But nothing new can come when we hold the old too firmly. It is easy to recognize the things which others (you can read “old people”) need to release. It is not so easy to see what we have so firmly grasped that we do not have an open hand to receive what is about to pass us by.

Discussion Questions:

Name one thing you would like to see come to an end? This can be a practice, a behavior, an attitude, or even an expectation.

Put yourself in the place of those holding on to this “thing” which you think needs to come to an end. Do not move on till you have come to understand why “they” would not want to see an end.

With great pride, name those things in your life which have become so special to you that you know you would fight to keep them firmly in place! Now, ask which of those others might not find as exciting.





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Vicar Meghan James

716-688-9245

trinityontransit11@gmail.com

Sunday 9:30 AM Eucharist

www.trinityontransit.org

www.facebook.com/TrinityOnTransit/

ZOOM CONNECTION

Our Zoom account, “Worship and Meetings” can be found at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85167890638?pwd=eHptd21KN01Vc0QyS2pSNVU4U3hUQT09>

ID # 851 6789 0638 Passcode: 860145

Wednesday Exegesis continues to offer in-person and Zoom, using Pr. Dan’s account:

ID# 460 550 4086 Passcode: 600776

Both of these accounts can be found at <https://zoom.us/>. You will need to download the app to your computer, phone or device. Then, to join our Zoom meeting simply go to:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4605504086> If you are using dial-up, find your local number at: <https://us04web.zoom.us/u/fei59xzihG>. To watch the recording of Sunday’s service go to www.trinityontransit.org.

SPENDING TIME WITH SOMEONE IS A VALUABLE MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

by Hannah Hawkinson for elca.org’s Women of the ELCA blog, 6/7/2021

WHEN I ARRIVED at the retirement community for my first day as a chaplain intern, what I’d learned through months of study and preparation ran through my head—especially the oft-prescribed, but rarely defined, “ministry of presence.” As I moved from room to room, introducing myself to residents, I felt woefully inadequate. Was I too present? Was I not present enough? Was I present in the right ways?

When I reached Miriam’s* second-floor room in the late afternoon, I was overwhelmed. Bedbound and unable to speak or move without assistance, Miriam had entered hospice care several months before I arrived. She spent her days in this room with her aide, Charlotte*, always by her side. As Charlotte greeted me, I noticed the family photos surrounding Miriam. I said “Hello,” and Miriam briefly opened her eyes, then sank back into sleep.

“You just made her day, and mine,” Charlotte said. I sat down beside the bed. Charlotte paused, then motioned to the photo nearest me. “That’s Miri’s son, Jeff,” she said. “He’s been out of town the past few weeks. It’s been a little tough with him, but it’s all on the mend now.” She followed suit for every photo around the bed, introducing me to Miriam’s family through her stories.

AM I DOING ENOUGH?

The three of us—a 23-year-old chaplain intern, a seasoned middle-aged medical professional, and a great-grandmother in her upper 90s—sat together for nearly an hour. I learned that

Charlotte had accompanied Miriam for more than 16 years, through every stage of her decline. “Sometimes I feel like I’m not doing enough, just sitting here with Miri all day,” Charlotte said, tears filling her eyes.

“But then I remember Jesus. And he did a whole lot of stuff, sure, walking from town to town, but he also spent time with people. I’m called to that now.”

Charlotte understood that to be truly present with someone—with no agenda and no conditions—is anything but simple and passive. Rather, ‘ministry of presence’ is actively rooted in the profound mundanity of human experience.

Charlotte’s ministry was to watch NCIS reruns 10 times over, spoon-feed, bathe, medicate, change linens, mop and sweep, coordinate schedules, water the plants, and sing Miri’s favorite songs when Miri’s own voice failed her. The work wasn’t glamorous or momentous; it was the foot-washing, bread-breaking ministry of the Messiah.

Like that of Jesus, Charlotte’s ministry is, first and foremost, one of compassionately, sincerely journeying with people where they are, as they are. Hospitality, constancy, companionship—these comprise a ministry of presence. It isn’t rocket science; it’s simply about being there.

