

Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod Newsletter

MARCH/APRIL 2020



Where is God leading us?

Long ago and far away I heard the words of Proverbs 29:18 spoken by a man who was seeking to remind the people he was working with the need of having a vision. He used the King James Version which reads in part, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The New Revised Standard Version while more textually accurate is less poetic. The Message, a readers bible by Eugene Peterson, reads as follows: “If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed.”

One of the tasks I have set for myself as bishop, and one of the tasks I have set for us as synod is to ask the question, “*Where is God leading us?*” Is where we have come the same as where we are going? In this 2020 year is our vision clear? Or are we going to stumble all over ourselves?

To get at this question, in the coming weeks and months, I will, along with Pastors Jacobson and Jones and the Synod Council, be asking this question of you. The question will come to you in many formats and forms. But it is the same question of discernment. We will listen to you. That is also part of the purpose of asking this question. What is your answer(s) to the question?

In May I will begin to bring together what I and our staff and Council have heard from you. What theme(s) might there be? What direction(s) are we being called in? Where is God leading us as we walk together? During our Assembly at Thiel, June 11-13, we will receive a report of what was spoken and heard and brought together. We will have time ask the question once more, “*Where is God leading us?*” And then to affirm a vision for our future as the people of God walking together in northwestern Pennsylvania.

I firmly believe we are blessed and we are called to be a blessing to our communities in which we live and work and learn and serve.

Called to Serve,

Bp. Lozano



CALENDAR

March

8– Daylight savings time– SRING FORWARD

14-23– Ellen Vacation

17– St. Patrick’s Day

19– First day of spring

21-Basic Practices of Christian Spirituality– TEEM w/ Bp. Jones

28-Basic Practices of Christian Spirituality-TEEM w/ Bp. Jones



April

7-Christm Liturgy. Twelve Apostles

8– Passover starts

9– Maundy Thursday

10– Good Friday Office Closed

12– Easter Sunday

13--Easter Monday Office Closed

18-Telling the Good News– TEEM w/ Bp. Jones

25-Telling the Good News– TEEM w/ Bp. Jones

25– Synod Council 10AM





Wrestling with Jakob

Fear Cannot Thrive Where Hope Abounds

My ancestors were the first white settlers in the part of Southwestern NY that I called home. Over the course of a few decades they became lumber barons, amassing a fortune in the timber industry. They owned sawmills, a railroad, huge tracts of land as well as a lucrative trade of raw logs which they floated down the Allegheny River to Pittsburgh.

At the turn of the 20th Century the lumber market crashed. While the fortune was lost the memory wasn't. As I look back over the generations since then, I realize that my great aunt, Marie took it upon herself in each generation to groom the next Messiah for when "the Lord would restore our family fortunes like the watercourses of the Allegheny."

I was one of those would-be messiahs. She taught me all the social graces, we dined in fine restaurants, we ate foods that my mother would never have allowed at our table, as she drank her Manhattan she would insist I have a Shirley Temple and taught me how to nurse a drink over the course of a meal. She took me to visit her friends and taught me how to interact with adults (especially those above my station), she introduced me to art, literature and music, but above all she insisted that I could be whatever I wanted to be and that I was destined for greatness.

Little did I realize that I was being raised in exile, removed from the land that once was, and living in a foreign land waiting for the return. As I have grown older I realized that the image of the exile is an appropriate descriptor of the spiritual state of much of the region of Northern Appalachia in grew up in and in which I live (perhaps most of the rest of the country as well). What once was is no longer, yet we still remember it and yearn for those days. Days when railroads crisscrossed the territory. Days when heavy industry and manufacturing occupied a place in almost every town. Days when most people enjoyed the same standard of living... not rich but comfortable. A day when kids grew up and took their place next to their parents on the assembly line or in the family business. A day when your neighbors were third and fourth generation residents. A time when we knew each other's stories and we cared for one another in time of crisis. A time when we knew only one or two people that didn't go to church. It was a time when we were *not* concerned about the future. No tinkering! - the present is working good enough. Leave it alone.

The generation that remembers those days best is fast passing away. My generation, while remembering those days took our parent's advice and fled for greener pastures and promising futures (some of us never made it over the fence).

These days we comment on our town and high school Facebook pages with our nostalgic laments.

What causes me despair is not that those days are gone (they were never as good as we think they were) but rather what is left behind. We have become like those by the rivers of Babylon who have forgotten how to sing our songs and tell our stories.

Without them, despair rushes in.

Gone with the railroads, the industry, the educational institutions, the small towns, is the spirit that built and sustained this region. It has been replaced by deep despair and resignation. I refer to it as “systemic stagnation”. Attempts to move forward are often met with great resistance. The system that has now taken control is one that benefits most from the status quo (even if it is toxic and sick).

The pervasiveness of this despair and entitlement and the complicity of the systems leaves me with little hope and a lot of fear for the future of our region. Adding to my despair is the fact that our region’s greatest export are our young people. As parents these days we pray that our kids will find good jobs somewhere else (just not too far away). Two of my three children have set down roots in this region which makes me proud and scared to death at the same time.

The drug crisis (which is the new cause *de jour* of all our troubles) is but a symptom of that deep despair. It is not an accident that the most popular drugs in our region are those that either dull pain (opioids) or give one the false sense of self-worth (meth-amphetamine).

Where I do see some hope is in those who are returning from the land beyond. Drawn back by the sacred soil out of which they came they are establishing micro-businesses and cottage industries...creative new ventures. They are infusing new life. New dreams. Perhaps in time, even hope!

There are also the crazy ones like me who love and believe in this place, who came back and refuse to leave. However, I am finding a new wave of burnout among these colleagues. More and more are leaving, tired of watching congregations, businesses and communities disappear before them. (in the last ten years my congregation has lost 55% of its worshipping membership – and they have not all died... they have left). Those of my colleagues that are sticking it out are saying, “I never thought I’d get to this point, but I don’t think I can stay here after retirement... it is destroying me.”

What keeps me going is that I truly believe that the faith community has a critical role to play in the future if we are willing to endure in hope. It is more than the fantasy of, “If we could just get Jesus back to where he belongs, in home, school and church, all our problems would go away.” (There were those in the time of the Exile that believed if they could just get back to the Torah/Law, life would be ok for the return trip... then they got

Cheerful Giving- Roland King, Synod Treasurer

In his second letter to the church in Corinth St. Paul writes, “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor.9.7), and St. Peter writes: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10).

And so it has been, and continues to be in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod. Per capita our synod ranks in the uppermost rankings of all synods of the ELCA, seemingly always in the top 5 if not the top 2 of the 65 synods.

At our last Synod Assembly, we presented to you the reality that congregational commitments to mission support were originally budgeted at just over \$736,000, and that actual commitments were going to present a \$28,000 shortfall. That shortfall meant \$14,000 less for our synod and \$14,000 less for the national church, two of the three various forms of God’s grace, as St. Peter described it above.

Well, my dear sisters and brothers, once again you have demonstrated your understanding of these two passages. Actual giving was \$733,863 against a budget of \$736, 182, and when you include a 2019 prepaid support amount of \$4,800 that was accrued in our 2018 income, your giving was actually \$2,481 over budget

Therefore, you didn’t just make-up the shortfall, you overcame it by almost \$2,500. Well done good and faithful servants. Your understanding of the churches three expressions (St. Peter’s “various forms”!): congregations, synods and national church, and the importance of each to the work in the kingdom, and your support is an example to all.

Blessings to each and everyone one of you! Ron King – Treasurer



home and discovered that home was now a Palestinian Appalachia) and they became distraught and disillusioned.

We will end this Lenten season with Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. The people in exile sound remarkably like us these days, "Our bones are dried up. Our hope is lost. We are clean cut off." God's response was swift and terse, "I'm going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel and you shall know that I am the Lord... I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live; then you shall know that I, the Lord, spoken and will act, says the Lord." God has not given up hope for us.

My Aunt Marie never lost hope. It was that hope that kept her from sitting around and wringing her hands. Instead she actively prepared for the future. How is God calling you and your congregation to live into the future as the resurrected people of God? Perhaps this Lenten season will be an opportune time for you to reflect on that question.

Rev. Jake Jacobson

Assembly Information

June 11-13, 2020
Thiel College
75 College Avenue
Greenville PA

Voting Members

Each congregation should have elected their 2 voting members to represent their congregation at Assembly. Each congregation is also invited to send 1 voting Youth Member. .

Registration information will be out in the coming month .

Theme

Sacred Stories

Celebration of Women in Ministry



When: Saturday May 16, 2020

Where: Grace Lutheran & St. John's Episcopal Church

1145 Buffalo St. Franklin, Pa. 16323

Time: 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM

**Keynote Speaker – Bishop Barbara Collins of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the
ELCA**

Lunch Provided

Co-Sponsored by :

Rev. Dr. Judith Gosnell-Lamb, Grace Lutheran Church

Rev. Elizabeth Yale, St. John's Episcopal Church

**RSVP required by May 8, 2020 at noon to grace.fkl@verizon.net Along with the
number of those attending, we will also be asking about your role/s and years in the
church.**

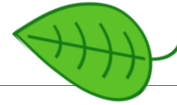
Please contact for further information:

Grace Lutheran Church 814-432-3018

or

St. John's Episcopal Church 814-432-5161

NWPA SYNOD GREEN TEAM-



WHERE DO I FIND...?

This year the Green Team is going to concentrate on sharing resources with you on your quest to support the Care of Creation.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

<https://www.elca.org/Environment>

“Caring for God's creation is an ever-evolving topic in this world, especially with each new natural or human made disaster. As stewards of this world, we are called to care for the earth and examine our behaviors toward creation. While we need to take from the land for food and sustainability, we also need to be careful that we maintain good stewardship and do not exploit the wonderful things the earth provides.

We are proud to share a pastoral statement [Opens in New Window](#) on creation care and climate solutions to ensure a viable, livable world from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton. *‘The present moment is a critical and urgent one, filled with both challenge and opportunity to act as individuals, citizens, leaders and communities of faith in solidarity with God's good creation and in hope for our shared future.’ 2018 Earth Day statement*” from ELCA.org

Take some time to “search” the ELCA.org website for “Care for Creation” resources, they are scattered in different locations throughout the website.

LUTHERANS RESTORING CREATION

Cultivation Hope & Healing for All

<https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>

“Lutherans Restoring Creation is a grassroots movement promoting care for creation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This is accomplished by cultivating a community of dedicated stewards of earth and neighbor who proclaim God's promise of hope and healing for all. Lutherans Restoring Creation has arisen out of a long Lutheran tradition of reflection and action on ad

ressing environmental concerns from the perspective of our faith and theology.

Most recently, this new initiative grows out of the important foundational work of the Lutheran Earth-keeping Network of the Synods or “LENS,” a small, dedicated network that has existed in one form or another, since 1997. Through the years, LENS has held retreats and workshops, prepared resource materials for congregations, provided information about earth-friendly laws and policies, and maintained a web presence through the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago via the “Web of Creation,” an ecumenical organization providing environmental resources for faith communities.

Lutherans Restoring Creation is proud and eager to take up the mantle for this work, with gratitude for the many hearts, minds, and hands that have laid such a good and faithful foundation for our current efforts. Thanks be to God, for all who have heard God's call – and prophetically challenged the rest of us – to be about the mission and ministry of caring for our Lord's good creation!” from lutheransrestoringcreation.org

On this website you will find tabs to explore: Events, Advocacy, Buildings/Grounds, Education, Personal Discipleship and Worship. This is an invaluable resource for planning and moving your congregations Care for Creation ministry forward in many ways. You will find ways to live your commitment to Caring for Creation forward in how your buildings and grounds can be made more energy efficient. You will find worship and preaching resources.

If you would like to be on the **NWPA SYNOD's Green Team's** email list or would like more information about the Green Team, contact Dennis Groce (d_mgroce@labs.net) with your name and email address.

Martin Luther, “God is wholly present in all creation, in every corner, behind you and before you.” (LW 51:43)

Save the Dates

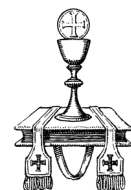
Rostered Leader Chrism Liturgy– April 7, 2020

Twelve Apostles Lutheran Church

358 Euclid Ave, Saegertown, PA 16433

Reception to Follow

RSVP by April 1, 2020 to NWPA Synod Office



NWPA Synod Assembly

June 11-13, 2020

Thiel College

Theme: Sacred Stories

Keep watch for registration information

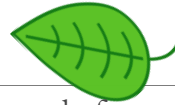
Lenten Prayer Space

The NWPA W/ELCA Prayer Room will be set up in the lower level at Lamb of God Lutheran Church, 606 East 38th Street, Erie 16504. It will be available during this Lenten season beginning on Ash Wednesday and running through Easter Sunday. On Thursday, March 5th the Women of Lamb of God will have a gathering to explore the prayer room together.

Tracy Heutsche will be available to guide people through the venues and answer any questions. Prayer stations will be added to the room each week during the entire Lenten season. Lamb of God invites your Women of the ELCA to join them at 6:30 pm.

Please contact the church office if you have any questions, 814-825-8830.

NWPA SYNOD GREEN TEAM-



Earth Day is every year. 2020 will be ***years of Day***. The Earth Day mate action. mous chal- but also the tunities — of climate



April 22 of April 22, mark ***50 Earth*** theme for 2020 is cli- The enor- lence — vast oppor- action on change

have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable. For more information, local events and lots of resources go to: <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/>

CREATION JUSTICE MINISTRIES

Creation Justice Ministries (formerly the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program) represents the creation care and environmental justice policies of major Christian denominations throughout the United States. They work in cooperation with 38 national faith bodies including Protestant denominations and Orthodox communions as well as regional faith groups, and congregants to protect and restore God's Creation.

“Doing “creation justice” means protecting, restoring, and rightly sharing God's creation. We seek justice for *all* of God's creation, including the human beings who live in it. Creation Justice Ministries’ approach to creation justice is informed by respect and love for our Creator. They draw on the rich heritage of Christian scriptures and traditions which call us not only to till and keep the Earth, but also to act for racial, economic and environmental justice. Some assert that there is too much focus on a narrowly conceived natural environment and not

enough focus on the social justice impacts of environmental degradation on poor communities and communities of color. Environmental consciousness and social justice are intimately intertwined. The language of “creation justice” emerged. Within this covenantal understanding of the web of life, the emphasis on justice arises as a central guiding impulse. If the word “creation” signals the totality of relationships with God, then creation justice signals the movement toward right relationships among all of God's creation. Using the term “creation” instead of “eco” or “environment” demonstrates our humble self-awareness that we are part of the created order and that our Creator is constantly at work with us to redeem and sustain. Using the term “justice” rather than “care” indicates our commitment to not only heal, tend, and restore God's creation, but to ensure the protection of God's planet and God's people from exploitation, as well as provision for the remediation of the damage that has been done. Because of the connotations and meanings of the phrase creation justice, it was adopted in the naming of Creation Justice Ministries.” Excerpts from a piece which originally appeared on the United Church of Christ Environmental Justice blog, “The Pollinator” by Shantha Ready Alonso, Executive Director of Creation Justice Ministries and Brooks Berndt, United Church of Christ Minister for Environmental Justice.

Creation Justice Ministries is hosting Ecumenical Advocacy Days, April 24-27th in Washington, DC. This year's theme is “Imagine! God's Earth & People Restored.” The focus will be on environmental and economic justice. For more information go to: <http://www.creationjustice.org/ecumenical-advocacy-days.html>

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OIL FEST- 2020 Titusville, PA

NWPA Synod is seeking individuals who would like to participate in designing , building and riding a float in the 2020 Titusville Oil Fest parade in August 2020 (parade date to be determined by city council)

The theme of the parade this year is Cartoons of the past and present.

We encourage Youth to participate in this event and hope this could be a fun activity and s team building event for anyone interested,

Please contact Ellen at the Synod Office.

50 Years of Ordained Women

With gratitude for those who have gone before and hope for the future, the ELCA gives thanks to God for the ministry of women. In 2019 and 2020 we celebrate 50 years of Lutheran women being ordained in the United States, 40 years of women of color being ordained, and 10 years of LGBTQIA+ individuals being able to serve freely.

As part of this anniversary year, we lament that women have been barred from serving and have been bullied, dismissed and excluded. We also celebrate the gifts and service that women have brought to our church and our world as pastors.

Congregations are encouraged to hold commemorative events throughout the year!

Female pastors are welcome to join a pre-gathering of the Rostered Ministers Gathering to celebrate 50 years of professional ministry, to lament the hardships that women in particular have had to face as pastors, and to work together to build a better future. For more information, go to elca.org/rmg.



**We Are Church,
We Are Called**

50•40•10

A Word from Ellen

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Pleasantville PA 16341-00453

Office: 814.589.7660

Email: nwpasynodelca@gmail.com

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Northwestern PA Synod, ELCA



WWW.NWPAELCA.ORG

Local Happenings

Bowl-A-Palooza

April 4, 2020

A great time to get together with your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers for a few hours of fun while you raise money to help youth right in our community! Bowl time is at 12:30 pm. To register your 4-6 person team, to make a donation, to become a sponsor, or to learn more about the program contact Youth Connection at (814) 676-9940 ext. 1228 or by e-mail at jwalters@fscas.org.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Worship Resources: Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns

When anxiety is high in our culture, worship continues to be a primary location for the proclamation both of the good news of Jesus Christ and of the continuing compassion and care of God in the midst of our humanity. It is a place where we can find solace and reassurance in the midst of our fears. Great care should be taken to continue this central ministry of the church, especially in these times. Congregations are advised to use common sense and intentional action with regard to preventing the spread of pathogens while continuing to gather around the means of grace.

In times of anxiety about the spread of such pathogens as COVID-19 (coronavirus) or influenza, churches are advised to follow the advice of the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and Prevention and the [World Health Organization](#) regarding gatherings of people. At this time, it is not necessary to cancel worship services or stop gathering around the means of grace. However, worship leaders should take some time to be well informed of the situation in their area and to examine worship practices with regard to the spread of pathogens, perhaps making small changes that will help alleviate the anxiety of the gathered assembly.

Passing of the peace

The passing of the peace is an integral way that the assembly recognizes the presence of the peace of Christ in their midst. It is not necessary to eliminate the passing of the peace from the worship service. However, it may be advisable, based on your local situation, for the presider to suggest how the assembly may greet one another without handshakes. The verbal greeting paired with a reverent bow may be suggested. Alternatively, congregations may offer hand sanitizer for use after the passing of the peace in an inconspicuous way by placing sanitizer bottles at the ends of pews, in pew racks or under chairs.

For more information, please see the ELCA Worship frequently asked question [“What is the Exchange of Peace?”](#)

Holy Communion

Many of our worship concerns in times of fear concerning the spread of pathogens center around the means of distribution of the elements at communion. Consider your local situation and if the risk is real or imagined. There may be no reason in your area to alter your communion distribution practices. Local worshiping communities will make decisions that both reflect the nature and meaning of Holy Communion, and make sense in their context. Some common-sense precautions may be all that is necessary:

- People (including pastors) who are ill with the virus or the flu should be encouraged to stay home from public worship.
- Servers of the meal should wash their hands before distributing the elements. This can be accomplished by providing on the credence table to the side of the altar a lavabo bowl that contains warm water and a small amount of antiseptic soap or by providing hand sanitizer in the sacristy or at another convenient location near the chancel.

- Thoroughly wash all communion vessels in hot water with disinfectant soap following each use.
- Since the earliest centuries, the church has made use of the common cup without credible evidence that the practice contributes to the spread of disease. However, any practice that uses one vessel that will be touched by a number of people is brought under scrutiny in times of public health concerns. Both the mouths that come in contact with a common cup and the hands that may come in contact with the bread and wine in intinction carry pathogens.

Even so, given the strength of this symbol of unity in the meal and the historical precedent, the use of the common cup is preferable to intinction. Historically, the church has been served without ill effect by favoring sacramental wine with a higher alcohol content (18%), normally served in a metal cup, thoroughly wiped (on both the inside and the outside of the rim) and turned for each communicant.

- An alternative to intinction or drinking from a common cup may be provided. During times of great fear and concern, congregations may choose to distribute wine by pouring it from one common pouring chalice into small cups, thereby maintaining the symbol of the common cup.
- If individuals are particularly hesitant about the communion elements for pressing reasons of health, they may commune under one element (“[The Use of the Means of Grace.](#)” Application 44C). The pastor may assure them that the crucified and risen Christ is fully present in, with and under this one element. While our confessions speak against communion “in one form,” their intent is to protest the practice of withholding the cup from the whole assembly (“[The Use of the Means of Grace.](#)” Application 44D).

For more information, please see the ELCA Worship frequently asked question “[How do we distribute Holy Communion?](#)”

Conclusion

Especially in times of need we are reminded that Jesus Christ is God’s living bread come down from heaven for the life of the world. During these times, particularly with a communal health concern, the Sunday assembly of Christians around word and sacrament is an important sign of resurrection hope in the midst of fear and trouble. We taste and see the Risen Christ’s presence in the community gathered around word and meal. In this eucharistic assembly we pray for the needs of a suffering world, and from this eucharistic assembly we are sent to care for all our neighbors who are sick, hurt and hungry.

Further questions may be directed to Worship team of the Office of the Presiding Bishop at 800-638-3522, ext. 2590, or worship@elca.org.

Updated March 2020

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How can people of faith help?

Our help is especially important for getting the word out to our neighbors living in our traditionally hard-to-count communities. Some of the Pennsylvanians who are most likely to be missed in our Census count include children, immigrants, and people of color. Rural households and residents experiencing economic hardship or homelessness are also likely to be missed. Our population count determines the federal support Pennsylvanians receive for the next ten years for education, healthcare, housing, food security, roads, and more.

Here are some specific ideas for what your congregation can do:

- Address the importance of the Census in the context of worship—sermons, homilies, prayers, etc.
- Hold educational forums for your congregation and community
- Reach out as a congregation to hard to count populations and stress how important it is that they respond
- Provide assistance in responding to the Census to vulnerable populations that you serve—the homeless, the hungry, LGBTQ persons, seniors, children and youth, poor and low-income—by providing the mechanism for response or guiding them to places where they can respond

TAKE THE PLEDGE TO BE COUNTED AT OUR WEBSITE!

Learn more and find resources for education and assistance:

- Pennsylvania Census 2020: <https://www.pa.gov/Census/>
- US Census 2020: <https://2020Census.gov/>
- Faith in Public Life: <https://www.faithinpubliclife.org/Census>
- Keystone Counts: <https://www.keystonecounts.org/>
- Pennsylvania Council of Churches: <https://www.pachurchesadvocacy.org/resources/2020-Census-resources/> (if you can't find what you need, contact s.strauss@pachurches.org)

**Pennsylvania
Council
of Churches**

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
900 S. Arlington Avenue, Suite 211A
Harrisburg, PA 17109
717-545-4761
www.pachurches.org
www.pachurchesadvocacy.org

Shape Your Future— Everyone Counts in Pennsylvania!



The Census is a constitutionally mandated count of all people residing in the US. It is meant to count all people regardless of race, faith tradition, immigration status or economic status, and occurs every 10 years.

Why is the Census important?

The U.S. Constitution requires a Census of all residents in the entire country every 10 years. The Census counts every person living in the U.S. once (and only once) in the right place. You are counted based on where you are living on April 1, 2020.

Everyone Counts

You might be living in an apartment, house, group housing situation (like a dorm or nursing home). You might be experiencing homelessness. Regardless of your living situation, you count as a Pennsylvanian. It also doesn't matter what your citizenship status is, how old you are, or your gender. If you live here, you matter to Pennsylvania and the Census.

Fair Representation

Neighborhoods change over time. The Census makes note of these demographic changes and reports the statistics. This information is then used to determine how many seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives. Pennsylvania currently has 18 Congressional representatives. We used to have 19 but lost a seat after the 2010 Census.

Additionally, state officials use the statistics produced by the decennial Census to redraw U.S. congressional and state legislative districts.

Federal Spending & Programs

Census data are used to decide how \$675 billion in federal public funding is spent every year. Pennsylvania gets \$26.8 billion annually through our 16 largest federally-funded programs. That's about \$2,000 per Pennsylvanian each year.

These numbers may change based on our 2020 Census data. Federal funding supports many important programs and services for Pennsylvanians, including in healthcare, food security, education, transportation, housing, community development, support for families, and more.

So why is the Census important to people of faith?



Dignity!

- We believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status, are made in God's image. **Our God-given dignity demands recognition.**
- What we declare when we answer the Census is that we are here, and we are part of "we the people" and **we refuse to be excluded.**
- *Fear not* is the most often repeated phrase in Hebrew and Christian scripture—repeated 365 times. **Do not be afraid to state your presence.**

Community!

- **You count in this country.** Your work and your contribution to the common good and common ground, moves beyond the walls of where we worship.
- **Your voice matters.** Your communities, your schools, your children need you to be counted to receive the right economic apportionment.
- We must work together and do everything in our power to make sure that everyone in our local communities are counted so we all can **get the resources we deserve.**

Democracy!

- By completing the Census and encouraging our communities do so, **we claim our rightful representation** and fulfill our responsibility to our neighbors and future generations.
- As **spiritual and moral** people, to participate in our democracy is to be counted.

We ALL count in the eyes of God—let's ALL count in the eyes of our government!

Information you need to know

Historically, these communities have been undercounted:



- African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos and Native Americans
- Households with low incomes
- Immigrants and individuals with low English-language proficiency
- Renters
- Residents who live in non-traditional housing
- Rural residents
- Highly mobile residents, such as farmworkers
- Very young children aged 0-4

How & When to Respond

Every household can respond to the 2020 Census online, by mail, or by phone. Responding to the Census should take only a few minutes.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 95% of households will receive their Census invitation in the mail and the remaining 5% will get their Census invitation delivered by a Census taker working for the bureau. These invitations will give you information about the ways you can answer the Census. Less than 1% of households will be counted in-person by a Census taker.

Census Day is April 1, 2020

Mark your calendar. April 1, 2020 is National Census Day. By this date, every home will have received their invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. When you respond to the Census, you tell the U.S. Census Bureau where you are living as of April 1, 2020.

As good neighbors and community members, we want everyone to be counted in the Census. Many of us likely have friends, family, coworkers, and others in our communi-

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ties who don't know about the importance of the 2020 Census. Help us spread awareness in your community. Text PACOUNTS to 898211 on your mobile phone to receive text message updates about the 2020 Census in either English or Spanish. Standard data rates may apply.