



**Southeastern
Pennsylvania
Synod, ELCA**

Dear SEPA Congregations,

Is your church sensing that it's time to grow and transform? The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's *Love Revolution* is looking for congregations who are ready to renew their sense of purpose to bring a group of lay and rostered leaders into a revolutionary process over the next two years. During our time together we will center on the work of Loving God and Loving Neighbor as we explore the 5 gifts of discipleship in the baptismal covenant:

Live among God's faithful people,
Hear God's word and share in the Lord's supper,
Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed,
Serve all people following the example of Jesus,
Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

During the two-year journey congregations will see how loving God and loving neighbor helps revolutionize the way we engage in our communities for the sake of the gospel. The *Love Revolution* journey will include things like engaging in retreats, cohort gatherings, synod-wide learning opportunities, congregation-wide curriculum development, and being matched with mentors and coaches to guide you along the journey.

It's time for us to revolutionize the way we are doing ministry, because the way we have always done it is no longer working for us. *Love Revolution* has been generously given funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., which means that costs for a congregation to participate in the revolution are just the gifts of your time. As a selected participant in the *Love Revolution*, each congregation will receive a micro-grant of up to \$5,000 to fund their curriculum or ideas they want to try as part of the revolution. Over the next four years, we will have the chance to engage two waves of congregations going through the two-year process. The first wave is engaging four congregations. As we build capacity, we will increase the number of congregations in the second and third waves. And we will pay it forward. Previous cohorts will provide support and mentoring to newly participating congregations.

For those not selected or not able to commit to the full two-year process, there also will be opportunities to participate in various synod-wide events throughout the year that also have been funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., as part of the *Love Revolution*. We hope this *Love Revolution* sparks a movement across SEPA Synod and the ELCA as we recommit to Love God and Love Neighbor.

Submission Process

Complete the application form and mail to:
Rick Summy (he/him/his)
Program Director, Love Revolution
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
7241 Germantown Ave., Brossman Center
Philadelphia, PA 19119

or e-mail: rsummy@sepa.org

Each congregation selected will participate in the following components of Love Revolution over a two-year period:

Launch worship service. Join us for a revival style worship service to surround program participants with prayer, praise and peaching as we begin the journey.

Four cohort gatherings based on the themes LIVE, HEAR, SERVE and STRIVE. These gatherings will allow for the idea sharing among congregations with topical speakers to bring lay leaders and pastors together in shared learning and collaboration. At the end of each gathering, congregational leadership teams will design curriculum to teach their congregations the key theme and experiments to try in their communities.

PROCLAIM retreat. Between Year A and B, we will gather the congregational leadership for a multi-day retreat to explore the baptismal promise of PROCLAIM. During this retreat, we will help participants discern and explore their unique giftedness to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

Coaching and mentoring. A **coach** from the ELCA Coaching Network will meet with the congregation in the first year to support their exploration of spiritual practices, finding what is authentic and life-giving in each context. In the second year, the coach will engage to help develop the congregation's connections to the community in the program area(s) they discern (children's ministry, feeding ministry, education, anti-racism, environment, etc.). The coach will keep congregation engaged in the learning process and will hold them accountable to their goal setting and congregational curriculum. A **mentor** will also meet regularly with the congregation and assist them to dive deeper into the retreat themes based on the baptismal covenant. The mentor will help the congregation wrestle with privilege and build the beloved kingdom with a sense of equity and belonging for all.

Two synod-wide learning days. The *Love Revolution* will help the synod explore how to cultivate thriving congregations who play a vital role in the community. Open to all SEPA congregations (including those who are not part of *Love Revolution*), these events will occur in the Fall and in the Spring as part of our Synod Assembly.

Microgrants. Participating congregations will be invited to apply for a microgrant of up to \$5,000 during their two-year process. Often, our clergy attend continuing education events and are unable to implement their learning due to a lack of funds. Microgrants will help remove that financial barrier to change.

Closing worship service. At the end of the two-year learning journey, we will gather for a revival style worship service of prayer, praise and preaching to affirm the work program participants have been doing and will continue to do. This will mark their transition into their new mentorship roles to journey with congregations in successive waves.

Selection Criteria. Congregations will be selected to participate in each program wave using the following criteria:

- ▶ Goal of at least one congregation to be selected from each of the five counties of SEPA Synod. Actual number per congregation may vary based on applications received.
- ▶ Congregations must have a strong leadership commitment to the Love Revolution. This typically would be at least one pastor and four to five lay people per congregation who will help share and implement the program at a congregation level. However, congregations in pastoral transition will be considered if they meet all the other criteria.

- ▶ All lay members must be able to commit to the full two-year process
- ▶ At least two people per team must commit to the additional one to two mentoring years. This should include the pastor if the congregation is not in pastoral transition.
- ▶ Consistent to the realities of our synod's diverse ministry, at least 20% of congregations selected will have the majority of the congregation's members identifying as BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) or whose primary language is not English or whose leadership represents historically underrepresented communities.
- ▶ Participating congregations will be selected with a preference for communities with a changed or changing demographic.

Congregations will participate in two-year waves, starting with five congregations in the first wave. Congregants will be asked to provide input in the SEPA Synod's annual program evaluation and reporting to the Lilly Endowment. As participants complete the process, we hope they will continue to be part of the learning community serving as mentors and volunteers with the successive waves of cohort congregations and other congregations across the synod.

Cohort timelines will be announced after the selection process for each wave is complete.