

Report of the Bishop – Part 1

Ordinations

- Marie Anderson, 8/23/2004 to associate, St. John, Kasson, 8/23/2004
- David Danner, 6/19/2004 to Redeemer, Good Thunder/Medo, Mapleton, 6/19/2004
- Lynn Enloe, 4/25/2004 to Co-pastor, Trinity, Blue Earth, 5/1/2004
- Christopher Fiske, 2/6/2005 to Bethel, Scarville & Trinity, Kiester, 2/6/2005
- Laura Fladten, 8/28/2004 to associate, Our Savior, Spring Valley, 8/28/2004
- Joanna Mitchell, 11/27/2004 to associate, Our Savior, Faribault, 12/6/2004
- Patrick Ziems, 5/8/2004 to associate, St. John, Montgomery, 6/15/2004

New Calls Within the Synod

- Karen Behling, Concordia Pickerel Lake, Albert Lea to associate, Our Savior, Austin, 11/1/2004
- Steven Berkeland, senior, St. Paul, Red Wing to senior, Grace, Fairmont, 12/1/2004
- Mary Iverson, associate, Bethlehem, Mankato to Epiphany, Eagle Lake, 2/9/2005
- Glenn Monson, associate, Our Savior, Austin to senior, Our Savior, Austin, 4/1/2004
- Scott Olson, term call, Central, Winona to permanent call, associate, Central, Winona, 7/25/2004
- David Rossow, First, LeSueur to Christ, Byron, 8/1/2004
- John Weisenburger, interim, St. John, Kasson to associate, Our Savior, Owatonna, 10/23/2004

Synod Council Calls to Specialized Ministry

- Christopher Croghan, on leave from call to faculty, Augustana College, 2 year term call, 9/1/2004
- John Gannett, Northeastern Iowa Synod to Interim, Hosanna, Rochester, Synod Council call, 9/1/2004
- Karen R. Hanson, Minneapolis Area Synod to Spiritual Health Services Manager, Fairview Red Wing Health Services, 9/1/2004
- Ann Hokenstad, Eastern North Dakota Synod to Campus Pastor, Minnesota State University Mankato, 6/29/2004
- Todd Nichol, Saint Paul Area Synod to Saint Olaf College faculty, 9/1/2004
- Charles Ortloff, received from LC-MS to Interim, First, LeSueur, Synod Council call, 9/1/2004
- Elaine Siemsen, term call, Saint Olaf College to extension of term call by Synod Council to 8/31/05, 9/1/2004
- Lyndon West, interim, First, Kenyon to interim, Trondhjem, Lonsdale, Synod Council call, 7/1/2004

Received into the Synod

- John Heille, East Central Synod of Wisconsin to associate, Zion, Stewartville, 4/1/2004
- David Hurtt, NW Minnesota to associate, First English, Faribault, 2/1/2004
- Thomas Isaacson, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin to senior, United Redeemer, Zumbrota, 3/1/2005
- Luther Mathsen, Rocky Mountain Synod to First, Kenyon, 6/15/2004
- Fred Rengstorf, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to senior, Our Savior's, Rochester, 9/1/2004
- Charles Solberg, retired, Minneapolis Area Synod, 1/18/2005
- Gary K. Hanson, La Crosse Area Synod to Concordia Bear Lake, Albert Lea & St. Paul, Conger, 1/1/2005



Retirement

- Duane Everson, St. Paul, Waterville, 2/1/2005
- Rodney Grubb, St. Olaf professor, 6/1/2000
- Herbert Hafermann, Missionary, Tanzania, 7/1/2004
- John Hagen, on leave from call, 2/22/2004
- Leonard Pankuch, Chaplain, St. Mary's, Rochester, 2/1/2005
- Howard Reinschmidt, Hosanna, Rochester, 6/1/2004
- Laurel Thorstensen, St. Paul, LeCenter, 7/1/2004
- Allan Tveite, North Waseca & Faith, Janesville, 11/1/2004

Transfer to Other Synods

- Jennelle Cuning, AIM, Grace, Fairmont to Southwestern Minnesota Synod, 2/1/2005
- Roberta Flood, associate, St. Olaf, Austin to Rocky Mountain Synod, 12/31/2004
- Philip Formo, senior, Gloria Dei, Rochester to Minneapolis Area Synod, 11/28/2004
- J. Mark Halvorson, First, Red Wing to Grand Canyon Synod, 8/15/2004
- Douglas Larson-Sell, Trondhjem, Lonsdale to South Central Synod of Wisconsin, 5/23/2004
- Mark Rydberg, on leave from call to Greater Milwaukee Synod, 5/31/2004
- Steven Svoboda, Grace, Fairmont to Minneapolis Area Synod, 10/5/2004
- Kristin Wee, associate, St. Olaf, Austin to Florida-Bahamas Synod, 12/31/2004
- Douglas Westerlund, East & West St. Olaf, Byron to South Dakota Synod, 9/5/2004
- Frezil Westerlund, East & West St. Olaf, Byron to South Dakota Synod, 9/5/2004

On Leave from Call

- Sandra Griffin, Trinity, West Concord, 7/1/2004
- Karl Guhn, Chaplain, Fairview Red Wing, 6/4/2004
- David Jarvis-Schroeder, St. Luke's, Goodhue, 9/1/2004
- Jennifer Jarvis-Schroeder, St. Luke's, Goodhue, 9/1/2004
- John R. Miller, First, Hope/Pontoppidan, Ellendale, 7/25/2004

Deaths

- Philip Anttila, retired, 3/28/2004
- Delbert Keltto, disability, 4/29/2004
- Harry Krieg, retired, 11/27/2004
- Lester Larson, retired, 1/9/2004
- Victor Quello, retired, 4/24/2004
- Edward Swenson, retired, 2/14/2004
- Sigurd Urberg, retired, 11/29/2004

Interims

- David Beckstrom, Epiphany, Eagle Lake, 11/01/03, 1/30/05
- Glen Bickford, Christ, Bryon, 7/09/03, 7/18/04
- Glen Bickford, First/Pontoppidan, Hope/Ellendale, 9/29/04
- Ken Carlson, Trinity, Blue Earth, 6/02/03, 3/31/04
- Clark Cary, United Redeemer, Zumbrota, 10/15/03, 2/15/05
- Wade Davick, Highland Prairie & Elstad, Peterson, 3/24/02
- David Droog, Our Savior, Owatonna, 4/07/03, 10/31/04
- Scott Duffus, Grace, Fairmont, 11/08/03, 11/15/04
- Don Flaten, Immanuel, Wykoff, 12/01/02
- Jeff Forbes, Henrytown, Canton, 6/01/02, 2/01/04
- Curtis Fox, Looney Valley/Cedar Valley, Houston/Winona, 7/01/03, 1/31/04
- Jack Gannett, Hosanna, Rochester, 7/15/04



- Kathy Gauger, East/West St. Olaf, 10/15/04
- Al Gunderson, Good Shepherd, Wells, 8/12/03, 1/31/04
- John Hagen, Redeemer/Medo, Good Thunder/Mapleton 9/14/03, 6/30/04
- John Hagen, Trinity, West Concord, 9/06/04
- Thomas Hanson, Cross of Christ & Cannon River, Welch, 12/01/03
- Arne Jessen, Grace, Waseca, 12/19/03
- Minette Johnson *, Henrytown, Canton, 2/15/04
- Lissa Kahl, Zion, Stewartville, 7/28/03, 4/17/04
- Gail Klavetter, Bear Creek/Grand Meadow, Grand Meadow, 3/14/04
- Karl Korbel, Our Savior's, Austin, 2/04/04, 10/31/04
- Karl Korbel, North Waseca/Faith, Waseca/Janesville, 11/22/04
- Dean Larson, St. Paul, LeCenter, 7/21/04
- Glenn Leaf, Good Shepherd, Plainview, 9/23/02, 1/01/04
- Tom Lee, First, Red Wing, 8/01/04
- Jack Nordgaard, First, Red Wing, 8/01/04, 3/31/05
- Charles Ortloff, First, LeSueur, 9/09/04
- Wayne Radke, First, Lake City, 1/02/04, 9/15/04
- Charles Solberg, St. Luke, Goodhue, 9/21/04, 1/09/05
- Bob Stoskopf, Trinity, Spring Grove, 12/09/02, 3/14/04
- Sue Wallager, Bear Lake/St. Paul, Albert Lea/Conger, 2/03/04, 1/01/05
- John Weisenburger, St. John's, Kasson, 2/16/03, 8/22/04
- Lyndy West, First Evangelical, Kenyon, 3/01/03, 5/31/04
- Lyndy West, Trondhjem, Lonsdale, 7/01/04
- Bruce Williams, Our Savior's, Rochester, 9/14/03, 8/01/04

* lay person licensed for interim ministry

Report of the Bishop – Part 2

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (I Peter 2)

This is a text that has received wide notice in our synod this past year. “**Called Into God’s Marvelous Light**” is the theme of the strategic plan that our Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, voted to adopt during last year’s synod assembly. It carries with it three main visions: **to be joyful witnesses; to be Christ-centered disciples; and to be strong leaders.** So much of our planning in the synod office revolves around these three visions. It has been an exciting process:

To Be Joyful Witnesses: We continue to identify and support new mission sites within our synod. Pastor Steve Ronningen is serving as mission developer for our newest mission adventure, as Gloria Dei Lutheran in Rochester has purchased land in the northwest part of the city to establish a second site called Glory to God Lutheran. And Rejoice! in Northfield continues to expand its new ministry as well.

In response to a motion adopted by last year’s synod assembly, each of our five conferences is seeking to identify a site for either a new mission effort or redevelopment site in their geographic area.

Seven of our congregations are now actively involved in a redevelopment program called Natural Church Development. This program enables each



congregation to identify an area of need in their ministry...and the means to work towards improvement.

Connecting our local and global context, we continue to develop our relationships with the Lutheran Church in Central Tanzania and the Lutheran Church of Colombia. Our Global Mission/ Companion Synod Committee continues to promote exchanges, having welcomed two pastors from Tanzania this past summer, and sending Richard and Lois Wintersteen from Mankato as teachers at Kiomboi. Our 2005 assembly will welcome the new bishop from Colombia, the Rev. Sigifredo Buitrago, and introduce him and his wife to our synod during his stay.

Paying particular attention to our youth and young adults, the synod sent visitors to the recent Lutheran Youth Organization national gathering. The intent is to reorganize an LYO presence in our synod, seeking to develop leadership and training opportunities for this important segment of our church.

To Be Christ-Centered Disciples: 2005 has been a time for prayer in our synod. Even as we have included prayers for individual congregations in Sunday worship, congregations are discovering still other means to lift up the discipline of prayer.

Discipleship also includes Scriptural study, the focus of our synod in 2006. To prepare for that emphasis, plans are being made with Augsburg Fortress Publishing to offer a synod-wide resource fair for congregations and members.

Worship is another spiritual discipline. Meetings have already begun to organize those from our congregational staffs who serve in worship and music. We are fortunate to have so many gifted musicians in our midst.

Ongoing efforts continue to focus on stewardship as well, with an emphasis on relationship building. Members of the synod stewardship task force have made individual visits in a number of congregations, and conference gatherings have brought pastors and council presidents together around the same theme.

To Be Strong Leaders: The Theological Conference for rostered leaders continues to be a highlight for growth and support in the synod. Plans continue to develop for an additional opportunity in 2006 where rostered leaders and spouses will be invited to enter into a spiritual renewal program.

Raising up new leaders to serve in Christ's church continues to be an important task in our midst. Avenues are being explored to bring such a special emphasis into our synod in the coming year.

Our synod endowment fund continues to offer financial support for seminary graduates accepting their first call in our synod. In addition to assisting with seminary debt after graduation, this year will afford the first opportunity for us to award scholarships to students presently attending seminary from our synod. These endowed funds will come from our synod's portion of the national Fund for Leaders in Mission effort.

But strong leaders are needed from the laity of the church as well. The Lay School of Theology continues to offer unique learning opportunities for members of our congregations. "Councils as Leaders of the Church" continues to offer a yearly opportunity for congregational lay leaders to explore leadership issues in the church. Church councils from across the synod have responded so positively that we had to provide two sites for this year's gathering.



In addition to these three visions, the strategic plan also charged the synod office with continuing to seek new means of communication. Our director of communication, Annie Lynsen, and our synod vice president Shirley Gangstad, have completed a series of communication meetings with secretaries and communication people in each of our conferences. A new communication tool, a monthly bulletin insert called “The Bridge” also now brings news into congregations from the synod and churchwide expressions of the church. Communication was also an important issue as the long-awaited recommendations regarding the sexuality study were made public. Gatherings have been held among pastors, and with the elected voting members who will attend the ELCA churchwide assembly in Orlando this summer.

I give thanks for those I am privileged to work with: Kathy Bolin, Audree Catalano, Beth Gabriel, Carolyn Goulet, Larry Iverson, Annie Lynsen, Deborah Ann Norrie, and Cheryse Sloan. Shirley Gangstad, the synod vice-president, and the members of the synod council continue to exercise faithful leadership on your behalf. Yet I especially treasure the relationships I have discovered in visiting so many of you during our “synod overnights.” My wife, Lynette, and I have now visited over 100 congregations throughout our synod. We have been witness to the grace of God which has “called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” That light is so visible throughout this synod. It gives me hope and strength for this calling.

What a privilege to share in this ministry with you,

Harold Usgaard
Bishop

Pastor Audree Catalano Synod Minister

“We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” (Acts 6:4)

Through prayer we are assured that God continues to use us as instruments through which God’s will is made known. This happens each day in the call and candidacy processes, with the Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team and First Call Theological Education, and in working to accomplish the challenges of “Called into God’s Marvelous Light.”

As I write this in early February, there are thirty congregations needing pastors. We have a number of interims working with these congregations during their transitional time. The interim pastors have established monthly meetings to support, encourage and learn from each other. The candidacy process is ongoing; however, changes are occurring. One change is a new candidacy manual, and another is that all candidates will need to have background checks before beginning the candidacy process.

The Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team has been working on a project for spiritual renewal for rostered leaders and on a program for youth and young adults focused on raising up future leaders for ministry in our Church. Both events are planned for 2006. We continue to plan for improving leadership on church councils by hosting an annual program, “Councils as Leaders of the Church.” The emphasis for 2005 was on dealing with conflict.

The focus of this year’s Theological Conference for rostered leaders and lay professionals will be health and self-care. An effort is being made to coordinate the strategic plan’s emphasis on prayer with the spiritual health and well-being of these pastors and lay leaders.



Through God's grace, the year-long emphasis on prayer throughout our synod and its teams and committees most assuredly will enhance and deepen our faith, our spiritual growth, and our ministry and service to the people of God in our churches and the communities.

PEACE+ and prayer,
Pastor Audree

Larry Iverson

Synod Minister

"Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins...No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:17)

Being Joyful Witnesses, Christ-Centered Disciples and Strong Leaders, the three visions in the synod's strategic plan, are good ways for God to stretch us. As part of 2005's emphasis, "A Synod Joined in Prayer," the Congregational Renewal Team has shared and will continue to share possible ideas for us to stretch our personal and corporate prayer lives, and to encourage prayer personally and as a congregation in our synod, including the prayer calendar listing congregations and ministries to pray for each week.

I am excited about the seven congregations that are stretching themselves by starting Natural Church Development, and have coaches trained in Phase 1. These coaches will work with a congregation, then go back for Phase 2 training in May and work with the Health Team in each of the congregations to improve the quality of the congregation during this year. Then these same coaches will be available to help other congregations in our synod. (Watch the monthly *River Crossings* for updates as the year goes on.)

God continues to stretch our congregations to grow in generosity and faith, and it is one of my great joys to offer support and guidance to congregations in stewardship, along with the Stewardship Task Force. I greatly appreciate the efforts of our congregations to grow and stretch as the Holy Spirit calls us to generosity, to explore and use the wonderful gifts that bless our lives and others as we share them.

This stretching also calls us to continue to remember those who are hungry and/or treated unjustly, and to speak out for those who lack voice in our world. The work of the Hunger Committee and Lutheran Coalition of Public Policy in Minnesota continue to stretch all of us beyond our own immediate world, and I thank the people of our congregations for their compassion and sharing of gifts and resources to serve God's mission in our midst. May we all continue to be stretched by the Holy Spirit to grow closer in relationship to each other and to Christ as we serve.

Your servant in Christ,
Larry Iverson

