



Shirley Gangstad

Synod Vice President

Greetings!

The primary focus of the Synod Council this past year has been on the strategic plan passed by the Synod Assembly in 2004: *Called into God's Marvelous Light*. This plan called for strong leaders, Christ-centered disciples, and joyful witnesses, and each aspect has been part of our planning. A fourth part of the strategic plan called for improved communication, and we have tried to focus on that in a variety of ways.

Annie Lynsen and I conducted six communications workshops for church communication workers. These were attended by nearly one hundred participants from 78 of our congregations and were primarily focused on providing both print and internet resources for our congregations. Annie has also worked diligently to improve the content of *River Crossings*, to broaden and make our website more user friendly, and to provide additional connections between the synod and the congregations through efforts like the bulletin/newsletter insert, *The Bridge*.

Another focus of time and energy this past year has been on space needs because of uncertainty about the future of Assisi Heights. A task force was formed to help us look at other office possibilities in Rochester. We also looked into becoming part of a Lutheran Center in Rochester. Our concerns were resolved when we were told that we could continue to have office space at Assisi Heights for some time into the future.

At each council meeting the Synod Council has been spending time getting acquainted with our ministry partners. We have met with representatives from the Minnesota Council of Churches and from the Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy

in Minnesota, and we will meet with other ministry partners throughout 2005.

As a synod we continue to be blessed by our loyal and efficient staff. I am personally blessed by being able to work with them and with all of you to serve Christ's church throughout Southeastern Minnesota.

Blessings in Christ,
Shirley

Notice to Assembly of Synod Council Action

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary

S18.31 This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution or bylaws of this church. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

At its meeting Saturday, February 19, 2005, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council unanimously adopted three continuing resolutions to S7.34.02 to clarify the resolution process in practice by the Committee on Reference & Counsel and are printed here to inform the assembly of that process.

S7.34 Committees of the Synod Assembly.

S7.34.01. Committee on Reference and Counsel.



S7.34.02. There shall be a Committee on Reference and Counsel, consisting of six members, appointed by the Synod Executive Committee, for staggered terms of three years. This committee shall receive, review, edit, and present resolutions to the Synod Assembly.

S7.34.A05 Resolutions for consideration by the annual Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly may be submitted as follows: (1) by majority vote of a congregation of the synod at a regular or special meeting of the congregation; (2) by approval by a two-thirds vote of a congregation council; (3) by majority vote of a committee of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod; (4) by majority vote of a conference assembly; or (5) by a group of at least ten members of congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod elected to serve as voting members of the forthcoming synod assembly. Minutes showing adoption of such proposed resolutions from a meeting of a congregation, Congregation Council, committee of the synod, or conference assembly must accompany the submitted resolution. The signatures, typed names, and telephone numbers must be provided by voting members (of the forthcoming synod assembly) submitting a resolution.

S7.34.B05 Resolutions for consideration by the annual Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly shall be received by the synod's Committee on Reference and Counsel by February 15 of the year of the assembly or three days after the conference assemblies, whichever is later. The committee shall review each resolution, and background information on the subject of the resolution, and may include a recommendation "to adopt" or "to decline" in the preassembly report. The committee may include a recommendation to give voting members elected to serve at the assembly adequate time to consider the resolution.

S7.34.C05 The Synod Assembly may allow an exception to the submission deadline of S7.34.B05 provided: (a) any late resolution shall be submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel by 3:00 p.m. on the first day of the Synod Assembly, and (b) the Synod Assembly, by motion passed by majority vote, specifically orders that such late resolution be placed on the Synod Assembly agenda.

Congregational Renewal Team – Synod Council

Marilyn Carpenter, Chair

The Congregational Renewal Team continues to work with others to address education, evangelism, youth activities, justice issues, rural ministry and “A Synod Joined in Prayer.”

Since last Synod Assembly we have been developing ways to share resources on prayer with one another. We sent out a “Synod Joined in Prayer” calendar, so that together we can pray for all the congregations of the synod throughout the year.

We continue to work with the ELCA in the process called “Natural Church Development.” Eight congregations are working with this process, in which they will identify strengths and opportunities for spiritual growth.

We support congregations and their new visions for outreach and evangelism in their communities by offering Evangelism Outreach Grants. Last year five congregations received this grant. It is wonderful to see how congregations are trying to spread the Word to their communities.

This team continues to support the work of the BLOC Heads as they support the youth workers of the synod. We also support LACE (Lutheran Association of Christian Educators) in their work with Christian educational development in our synod.

On behalf of the synod, thank you to all the members of the Congregational Renewal Team for your work: Pastor Jim Ahlquist, Rev Cindy Fisher-Broin, Pastor Richard Spande, AIM Cathy Mannel, Jeff Setterlund, synod treasurer, Carolyn Goulet, synod support staff, and Larry Iverson, synod minister.

Please share your questions, concerns

and thoughts with us regarding congregational renewal. We look forward to serving our Lord with you in the future.

Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team – Synod Council

John Petersburg, Chair

The Synod Constitution assigns our team the responsibility to assist in training and support of lay congregational officers and leaders; provide professional support for and recruitment of pastors, AIMs and church staff; and to direct the First Call Theological Education program.

The 2004 Theological Conference, “Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of John” with keynote speaker Pastor Susan Briehl, was well attended and enjoyed. The Theological Conference Planning Committee did another great job in putting this event together.

In March 2005, “Councils as Leaders of the Church: Dealing with Conflict” was held in Owatonna. This year, due to the size of the group, we split it into two locations; the Pastoral & Family sized councils were hosted at Trinity with Earlene Wickre presenting, and the Program and Corporate sized councils were hosted at St. John with Larry Johnson presenting.

We spent considerable time reviewing the 2006 Compensation and Benefits Guidelines. We addressed Resolution 2004-09 from the 2004 Synod Assembly, as well as various other concerns presented to us by pastors and congregations.

Our team is also working on two projects that we hope to implement in the next couple of years. They include programs and/or tools to revitalize our recruitment of pastoral staff and AIMs into ministry, and options and/or support of





spiritual renewal for a continuing, healthy rostered staff within our synod.

Team Members: Pastor Daniel Baker, BettyAnn Hernke, Dr. Rebecca Koelln, Pastor Scott E. Olson, Beverly Sundheim, Advisory – Pastor Audree Catalano, Recorder – Beth Gabriel

Mission Planning and Action Team – Synod Council

Ann Beatty and Barbara Knutson, Co-Chairs

The Mission Planning and Action Team has followed and supported the mission progress of our newest congregations, Peace in Eyota, Rejoice! in Northfield, and Glory to God, Gloria Dei Lutheran's "offspring" that will open its doors in September 2005. Pastors Peter Reuss from Peace and Steve Ronningen from Gloria Dei have each given presentations to the committee sharing their visions, updates, and needs for the upcoming year. These are very exciting and important months for them and we will continue to monitor their progress and pray for their needed support.

We are grateful for the support that Richard Mork from the Division of Outreach brings to each of these new congregations and many others in our region.

The team continues to seek ways for funding other mission starts through the I'm Ready for Mission, Mission Partners, and Mission Emphasis programs.

We have had recent developments in the areas of multicultural ministries and rural ministries in our region.

Future meetings will continue to focus on building further support and outreach between our synod's congregations. There continue to be wonderful opportunities for

every congregation to participate in mission growth and support within Southeastern Minnesota. The team hopes to see continued discussion, educational opportunities, financial support, and prayers shared by all.

Committee on Candidacy

Dr. Noel R. Peterson, Chair

The Committee on Candidacy of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod is charged with support, counsel and encouragement of candidates for rostered ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The committee meets three times a year at Assisi Heights in Rochester and Luther Seminary to do entrance, endorsement and approval interviews with seminarians. In 2004, the committee approved 14 individuals for entrance to seminary. The committee was encouraged by the high quality and readiness of the candidates. The church will be well-served for years to come.

The Candidacy Committee acts on behalf of the ELCA and the synod to determine the readiness of persons to enter theological education, to endorse candidates for a specific roster of the church and to approve an individual's qualifications and readiness to serve in rostered ministry. The committee uses churchwide standards, requirements and expectations to assess this readiness for ministry. The committee sees itself in a partnership with the candidates, congregations, synod and seminaries to achieve these goals.

The committee is blessed with outstanding members, dedicated to service to the ELCA and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Committee members in 2004 were: Pastor Mark Boorsma, Cleveland; Ms. Beth Carrier, Winona; Pastor Clark Cary, Zumbrota; Pastor



Christine Finsand, Chatfield; Pastor Ron Gilthvedt, Owatonna; Ms. Milly Halverson, Spring Grove; Pastor Richard Jorgensen, Faribault; Ms. Patti Mathews, Fairmont; Ms. Miri Mattson, Rochester; Dr. Noel Peterson, Rochester; Pastor Audree Catalano, synod staff; Pastor Craig Boehlke, Region 3; and Dr. David Fredrickson, Luther Seminary. Pastors Cary, Finsand and Gilthvedt have finished their terms on the committee. We thank them for their hard work and dedication to this important church function. We will welcome Pastors Steve Bohling, Nancy Drier and Stephen Fiksdal to the committee in 2005.

A special word of thanks goes to Ms. Beth Gabriel at the synod office, whose attention to detail keeps us running smoothly.

God's peace and blessing,
Noel R. Peterson

Global Mission/ Companion Synods Committee

Pastor Nick Fisher-Broin, Chair

The Global Mission/Companion Synods Committee had a very full year of work. The following areas provide a brief glimpse into the past year's work.

Colombian Lutheran Church Partnership

- Resolution of Invitation for Bishop Sijifredo Buitrago to visit the 2005 Synod Assembly
- Ongoing conversation with LSS and IELCO about hospitality opportunities for adoptive families coming to Colombia from U.S.
- Development of the Sal y Luz (Salt and Light) Project of partnership with Colombian churches needing solidarity in

the midst of violence; the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Women of the ELCA have taken a key role in the partnership development

- Continuing support of the Becas Lizwan Scholarship Program
- Begin work on a small delegation to travel to Colombia in 2006

Central Diocese of Tanzania Partnership

- Support of missionary teacher Ms. Mary Sween at Kiomboi for two terms
- Synod Youth Servant Trip delegation to work at Iambi Hospital and Kiomboi Land Restoration Project
- Support for three month missionary visit by Pastor Alan Kingu to Southeastern Minnesota Synod from Kiomboi
- Support of Mwangaza Teacher Exchange between Ms. Valerie Gudmanson and Pastor Elirehema Nkungu
- Continuing support and development of Land Restoration Project at Kiomboi
- Development of handbook/policy manual for training of all Southeastern Minnesota Synod short and long term missionaries
- Purchase of a new Toyota Landcruiser for use at Kiomboi through a designated gift
- Continuing support for the Iambi Hospital renovation project
- Wintersteens of Mankato are current teachers at Kiomboi for Administration course

Global Missions

- Resolution to raise financial support for Missionary Sponsorship through Southeastern Minnesota Synod congregations is underway
- Development of a comprehensive brochure to identify and promote Mission Partnership opportunities
- Support for two women to attend



Women's Advocacy Training Program in South America with Women of the ELCA

- Resolution of support for the Morogoro Mission District in Tanzania

Respectfully Submitted,
 Pastor Nick Fisher-Broin, chair; Pastor Byron Meline, Pastor Linda Helberg, Mrs. Carol Tjosaas, Mr. Randy Stangler, Pastor Roger Knudson, Pastor Meg Sander, Ms. Judith Peterson, Ms. Kathy Bolin, synod staff; Bishop Harold Usgaard, synod staff

Lay School of Theology Board

Kathy Bolin, Administrator

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod's Lay School of Theology continued to offer sessions every three months throughout 2004. Due to anticipated renovations at Assisi Heights, several sessions were held at Trinity in Owatonna; Our Savior's in Austin; and at Samaritan Bethany on 8th Street in Rochester. Participants enjoyed the change of scenery but also enjoy continuing to use Assisi Heights. Future Lay School sessions will be offered both at Assisi Heights and at various churches throughout the synod.

Sessions held in 2004 were "Sermon Preparation: The Witness of Preaching" with Prof. Michael Rogness; "Bearing Faithful Witness: Being Christian in Community with Muslims" with Prof. Mark Swanson; "Befriender Ministry: Lay Congregational Caregiving" with Mary Lou Negard (LSS); and "The Book of Isaiah: Challenges and Promises" with Prof. Fred Gaiser. An average of 21 people attended each session with more than half being those who attend frequently. Participants' evaluations of each session continue to rank the Lay School offerings as worthwhile and as providing opportunities for spiritual

growth and understanding for participants.

The application process and forms for those being called to become Synodically Authorized Ministers were developed. To date no one has formally applied.

Pastor Louise Stromberg was welcomed onto the Lay School Board in 2004. Other members are Pastor Jack Miller, Pastor Wayne Vogt, Carmen Nesseth, Craig Nelson, and Larry Iverson, synod minister.

Lay School sessions are announced in *River Crossings* and on the synod web site.

Sabbatical Committee

Pastor Mark Dumke, Chair

Your synod Sabbatical Committee, consisting of Pastors Meredith Bedker Musaus, Gary Benson, Mike Lockerby, Dick Hegal, Audree Catalano and Mark Dumke, works to strengthen the ministry of pastors, lay professionals and congregations by providing guidance and financial support for sabbatical time.

The synod's sabbatical policy states, "Beginning with the Bible's story of creation, and quietly echoing down through all the generations and communities of the people of God, is the concept of Sabbath: the rhythm of work and rest, and how the wholeness of life is to be found in that harmony. Those who study parish ministry have found that healthy pastorates (especially those of longer duration) require that attention be paid to this "sabbatical" rhythm if that health – for both pastor and parish – is to be maintained. Far from simply being a "favor" to the pastor, the synod's sabbatical program is designed to offer refreshment and renewal for the whole ministry of the congregation by taking seriously the need for our called leaders to be renewed and inspired by all of the

dimensions – rest, reflection, study, prayer, and more – that are included in a period called “sabbatical.”

If funds are available for the calendar year the grant applicant may receive up to \$2,000 (salary and benefits to continue) and the congregation may receive up to \$2,000 from the sabbatical funds for interim ministry up to three months.

Three applications were approved for full funding in fiscal year 2005.

Application forms are available from the synod office or can be downloaded from the synod web site.

BLOC Heads (Youth Directors Committed to “Building Lives On Christ”)

Kris Opegard

The BLOC Heads are a committed group of youth workers in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. This group is open to all full-time, part-time, and volunteer ELCA youth workers in the synod. Together, we are an organization that focuses on networking, resourcing, and mentoring.

Our 2004 meeting topics included: ELCA Youth Ministry Network, First Aid & CPR certification, resource sharing, FaithInkubators, safe boundaries in ministry, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Christian music, ELCA Youth Ministry Network, web site set-up, volunteer appreciation, and Breakfast with the Bishop (with Lutheran Association of Christian Educators).

Brochures about our meetings are handed out at the Synod Assembly each year. Monthly e-mails are sent out concerning lunch & meeting details. If you want to be added to the e-mail list, please e-mail Kris at trinityyouthrock@yahoo.com.

In December 2004, two synod youth

workers, Jenny Johnson & Abby Romme, and a synod youth, Molly Loegering, attended the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Council of Synod Presidents meeting. LYO hasn't been active in this synod for a long while, so we are strategizing a new way to make LYO work in this synod.

Also, the BLOC Heads are resurrecting the BLOC parties in 2005. The high school BLOC party will happen in the fall of 2005, and the junior high BLOC party will happen in the spring of 2006. For details, stop by the BLOC Heads table at the synod assembly, or contact the youth worker at your church.

Thank you for your continued support of the BLOC Heads, through your prayers and financial support of the synod. The youth is the future of the ELCA church! We are in this journey together!

Lutheran Association of Christian Educators (LACE)

Carole Joyce

Our mission is to support the ministry of Christian education.

Our vision is to create a community for energizing, inspiring, and supporting Christian education in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA through:

- gathering for idea sharing and support
- providing resources and educational opportunities
- facilitating communications
- nurturing spiritual growth

In 2004-5 Southeastern Minnesota LACE focused on:

- building relationships among all involved in the ministry of Christian education in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod (rostered, lay, and volunteer) and building relationships with BLOC Heads
- sharing our visions for education in the





synod with Bishop Usgaard

- Faith Family Style training
- regular meeting schedule with topics including communication, resources, computers and Internet resources, children and special needs

LACE meets on the third Thursday of Jan., March, May, July, Sept., and Nov. at various churches in the synod. The meeting goes from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. with a brown bag lunch at noon for those who can come early for fellowship.

Anyone and everyone with interests in Christian education (rostered, lay and volunteer) is invited and encouraged to attend! Send your Christian education directors, Sunday school superintendents, family ministry leaders and education pastors.

- Visit the LACE display at this assembly to find out more.
- Brochures are available with the 2005-2006 meeting dates.
- The schedule will also be posted on the synod web site (on the "Meetings" page).

For more information contact Marcia Pedersen at mpedersen@oursaviorsaustin.org.

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Mankato **Pastor Anne Hokenstad,** **Campus Pastor**

Busy. Eventful. Quiet. Prayerful. Grace. Joy. These words describe the week at the Crossroads, where Lutheran Campus Ministry dwells.

It is a privilege to experience the Church in this place, for there is continual evidence of God's creation moving, renewing, resurrecting us as God's daughters and sons.

Students study here. Two live here.

Many worship here through blended, traditional, and Praise Band style worship services. Students eat home-cooked meals for \$1. They discover God's Word for them through preaching and biblical study. Students play here. Service projects are imaged. Joint ministry and university events are lived out. Ecumenism is practiced. Above all, students experience staff, sustaining, and life giving relationships in Christ's living body.

On behalf of the students, local council members, worshipping members faculty and staff, and others in our faith community, I wish to thank you as a synod, as individual congregations, as well as individual men and women for your prayer support, your children, and your financial gifts.

Loving. Compassionate. Curious. Hopeful. Learning. Growing. Seeking. These are the words of I would use to describe students. Students today seek truth. They desire to have a compassionate heart for others. They are hopeful for the future. Many are curious about life. Many want to grow in goodness. Most want to experience the "Real Deal."

Join us in the faith journey at LCM - Crossroads! For when we meet one another as sojourners, each on a walk of faith, we meet our Christ in the face of the other. And that is Good!

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Winona **Pastor John Carrier,** **Campus Pastor**

Here is the account of just one daughter who is "Called into God's Marvelous Light...Today!"

In Mankato, Winona, nine other sites in Minnesota, and about 150 locations nationwide, without Lutheran Campus Ministries, how many "Bryns" would

remain people "...who dwell in deep darkness?"

"I'm a first year student at Minnesota State College S-E Technical, soon to be a student at Winona State University; majoring in radio broadcasting. My name is Bryn. I'm 20 years old, and started attending the LCC when I was still recovering from my mental illness. The LCC was a place for me to make new friends after high school after everyone I knew had moved away for college. Alone in Winona to fend for myself...seeing everyone off, ACT's, and preparing for college were overwhelming...I drifted into a deep depression. I was slowly recovering from this depression [when] I became aware that there was a Lutheran Campus Center in town that was looking for a piano player. I've played the piano almost all my life, and was extremely happy to know that I was more than welcome to play for them.

The kindness and welcome [offered] is enormous. I wouldn't trade it for anything, especially in my time of need. I've made lasting friendships, deepened my faith, and have a good time goofing around...The LCC has given me the chance to have confidence in myself again, and I will be forever grateful. Sincerely, Bryn"

Thank you for Caring for the Future.

Lutheran Men in Mission

Russell Tesch, President

- Board met quarterly at the synod conference room, Assisi Heights, Rochester
- Developed a vision and mission statement for our synod: "Builders of men for Christ through a men's group in every congregation."
- Hosted synod LMM event on May 1 – "We're All in the Same Boat" Breakfast

with the Bishop at Cabela's near Owatonna. We had 131 participants – devotions by Bishop Harold Usgaard, keynote address by Tim Penny (former U.S. Congressman), special music and sing-a-long led by Dr. Mike Harvey from Waseca. Joel Nevin, Region 3 representative brought greetings on behalf of the ELCA Lutheran Men in Mission. A survey was completed by some of those present to learn what activities, events, and topics of interest would inspire men's ministry.

- Participated in October Good Earth Village Workday – assisted with fall projects and joined in fellowship with staff and other volunteers
- Planning third annual Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's on Saturday, April 23, 2005 – featuring speaker Al Batt
- Looking ahead – Lutheran Men's Gathering July 22-24, 2005, in Charleston, South Carolina

Women of the ELCA

Marie Tesch, President

We were admonished in 2002 to "Listen, God is Calling," and in 2004 we were called into action by participation in "Saying Yes! The next step" retreats. During 2005 we are called to "Act Boldly" on our faith in Jesus Christ through prayer, offerings, and participation in the Sixth Triennial Gathering of the Women of the Evangelical Church of America, July 5-10, 2005 in San Antonio, Texas.

In 2004:

- Board members V. J. Anderson and Margaret Blume attended the Anti-Racism Program training. They are equipped to share ways to mutually enrich cross-cultural relationships and bring change in attitudes and actions.
- Genie Hanson and Andrea Groskreutz went on the "Women Building Global Community" trip to Peru and Brazil. They



are serving as advocates and speakers.

- The Sal y Luz (Salt & Light) project is partnered with Colombia's courageous Peace Sanctuary Churches. Mary Sue Dale and Sharon Barnes have committed to help guide and facilitate our community involvement and to lift up in prayer the Colombian churches' stories as peacemakers, bringing their extraordinary witness to the attention of others.
- I participated in the LWR Study Visit/Coffee Tour to Tanzania.
- Bishop Emeritus Glenn Nycklemoe and seminary students who have received scholarships presented our New Mission Focus at the fall conference workshops: the establishment of the Southeastern Minnesota Women of the ELCA Seminary Scholarship Fund as part of the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission. Our goal, with matching funds from Thrivent, is to raise \$25,000 by August 31, 2005.

Others serving on the board are Joanne Wertjes, Renata Rislow, Karen Gray, and Nadine Wickersham-Krull. Their faithfulness and service continue to bless many women.



Artwork for the
ELCA 2005 Devotional Guide for
Congregation Councils and
Committees
by Richard R. Caemmerer

