



Shirley Gangstad

Synod Vice President

Greetings!

The biggest news for our synod this year is that we can continue to have our office at Assisi Heights. Our staff is working with Mayo staff on plans to reconfigure the space so that it can be better utilized to suit our current needs. This remodeling will probably take place this summer.

Last fall the synod office underwent an Operations Assessment by Jon Christensen who looked primarily at job descriptions, office efficiency, and the organization and operation of the synod council. In light of his recommendations the synod council has decided to continue having three teams, but to try to limit the focus of each team to three goals per year, all related to the strategic plan. The council also looked at all of the programs conducted by the synod and is still in discussion about the most efficient manner for us to hold council meetings.

The synod council has adopted an Electronic Communication Policy and Publication Policies, all of which can be found on the website and which can serve as models for similar policies in the congregation. The council also adopted new rules for Synod Assembly.

Annie Lynsen continued her monthly meetings with the Communicators and also held Communication Workshops before she left the synod to work for the ELCA. We are grateful for all of Annie's good work for us, and we welcome Katie Butler to the position of communications director.

Throughout 2005 the synod council met with our ministry partners to learn about their programs and the impact of our support to them.

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

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.B06 Resolutions for consideration by the annual Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly shall be received by the synod's Committee of Reference and Counsel by ~~February 15~~ **March 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 publish*



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 of Reference and Counsel by 3:00 PM 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.

S7.34.B06 (in bold) revised by the Synod Council January 18, 2006 and recorded in the Synod Council minutes of March 18, 2006.

Congregational Renewal Team – Synod Council **Marilyn Carpenter-Crossfield,** **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 Bible Study.”

Since the last Synod Assembly, our focus turned towards developing ways to share resources on Bible Study. This year we sent out a “Synod Joined in Bible Study and Prayer” calendar with congregations to pray for and verses for every congregation to ponder on each week, so together we are in prayer and study.

We continue to work with the ELCA in the process called “Natural Church Development.” Eight congregations are

completing this process, in which they are identifying strengths and opportunities for spiritual growth. Our goal is for other congregations to be involved in this process.

We support congregations and their new visions for outreach and evangelism in their communities by offering Evangelism Outreach Grants. Last year one congregation applied and received this grant. The remainder of the grant money went to support the Communication Workshops.

This team continues to support the BLOC (Building Lives On Christ) Heads as they support the youth workers of the synod. We also support LACE (Lutheran Association of Christian Educators) in their work to support Christian educators in our synod.

On behalf of the synod, thank you to the members of the Congregational Renewal Team for your faithful work: Rev. Jim Ahlquist, Rev. Cindy Fisher-Broin, Rev. 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.

This year saw our team begin two new



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: Glory to God, sponsored by Gloria Dei Lutheran of Rochester, Peace in Eyota, Rejoice! in Northfield, and our new Sudanese congregation, that meets Sunday afternoons at Zumbro Lutheran in Rochester. Pastors Steve Ronningen, from Gloria to God and Peter Ruess from Peace, have each given presentations to the committee sharing their visions, updates, and needs for the upcoming year. The Sudanese congregation offers a multicultural worship experience and has provided many new immigrants to southeastern Minnesota the opportunity to gather and worship regularly. These are very exciting and important months for these growing congregations 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.

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

programs. A sub-committee is working on ways to help our rostered staff within the synod develop ways to renew their spiritual health and well-being. The second sub-committee led by Rev. Scott Olson held a meeting on Feb 9, 2006 with a group of effective clergy and youth leaders from around the synod. They discussed our "Call to Ministry Project" and developed two events for attracting more people into ministry. In April 2006 they are planning a "Magical Mystery Bus Trip" to Luther Seminary's Preview event and in 2007 a "Leadership Lab" located on a local campus. Please watch for details.

On March 12, 2006, "Councils as Leaders of the Church: Raising Up Strong Leaders" was held at Zumbro Lutheran Church in Rochester. This year, we emphasized the importance of the officers of each council and some helpful hints in doing their jobs. Key note speakers were Dr. Richard Bliese, President of Luther Seminary, and Bishop Harold Usgaard.

We spent considerable time in reviewing the 2007 Salary Guidelines. We addressed and changed two major items in the guidelines. The first was to clarify how the FICA Tax Allowance for pastors was figured. The other was to determine how the salary increases were to be distributed in the Salary Schedules printed. Specifically how do we keep the yearly step increases the same for each year and still keep it equitable and fair.

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



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 ELCA. It 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, using 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 meets three times a year at Assisi Heights in Rochester and Luther Seminary. At its April 2005 meeting, the Committee was joined by Cherlyne Beck, the ELCA Director for Candidacy, who brought words of greeting and encouragement. In 2005 the Committee approved 7 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 Committee is blessed with outstanding members, dedicated to service to the ELCA and the SE Minnesota Synod. Committee members in 2005 were: Rev. Steve Bohling, Blue Earth; Rev. Mark Boorsma, Cleveland; Ms. Beth Carrier, Winona; Rev. Stephen Fiksdal, Mabel; Rev. Richard Jorgensen, Faribault; Ms. Patti Mathews, Fairmont; Ms. Miri Matson, Rochester; Dr. Noel Peterson, Rochester; Rev. Audree Catalano, Synod staff; Rev. Craig Boehlke, Region 3; and

Dr. David Frederickson, Luther Seminary.

A special word of thanks goes to Ms. Beth Gabriel at the Synod office.

God's peace and blessing,
Noel R. Peterson

Global Mission/ Companion Synods Committee

Pastor Nick Fisher-Broin, Chair

As in past years the Global Mission/Companion Synods committee has had a full year of discerning how best to be faithful stewards of its resources and effectively assist our Companions in both Columbia and the Central Diocese of Tanzania. With the civil unrest in Columbia lingering on and the election of Eliophoo Sima in the Central Diocese, creating temporary unknowns for the committee, it directed its attention on examining its role in our synod, determining that the GM/CS committee should be a facilitator for all the congregations within our synod in strengthening their mission outreach, while at the same time cultivating a Christly relationship with Columbia and the Central Diocese in Tanzania. The committee identified four areas of focus:

1.) Partner Congregation

Relationships: Review they are and what is not working in existing partner congregation relations and put together a series of helps to assist in strengthening those ties and help link other congregations.

2.) Special Events: Promote opportunities for mission growth that already exist within the synod and develop new ones.

3.) Communications: Update mission website information and develop avenues of sharing mission



opportunities within the synod in a timely effective manner.

4.) Companion Advisory: Assist staff in carrying out committee directives.

Task forces were formed including both committee and non-committee members to broaden the scope and ability of each. The committee's goal is to help make global missions alive in every congregation within the synod.

Lay School of Theology Board

Kathy Bolin, Administrator

The Lay School of Theology held three sessions 2005. These sessions included "Reading and Understanding the Bible" with Prof. Craig Koester of Luther Seminary; "Being for Others: Our Call to Servanthood" with Rev. Victor Jortack, Rev. Jack Miller, and Pauline Redmond; and "Spirituality and Faith Formation" with Dr. Richard Wallace of Luther Seminary. Sessions were held in churches around the synod providing the opportunity for new participants to attend. Participants come from ELCA congregations across the synod and some are from other denominations. Over 250 people have attended Lay School of Theology sessions since they were begun in November of 2000. Attendance varies but averages around 18 – 20 per session. Most participants attend for personal spiritual growth and enjoy the opportunity to learn from professors and teachers that would not ordinarily be in their own congregation.

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 Gary Benson, Mike Lockerby, Dick Hegal, and Mark Dumke, with synod support from Audrey Catalano, 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. Four applications were approved for full funding in FY 2006. Funds available for sabbaticals may vary from year to year. Application forms are available from the synod office or can be downloaded from the synod website.



BLOC Heads

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

Kris Oppegard

The BLOC Heads are a group of youth workers in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod committed to the Building Lives On Christ. Together, we are an organization that focuses on networking and resourcing with fellow youth workers. Through our meetings and fellowship lunches, we strive to foster relationships among our synod youth workers, thereby creating a community of support for one another. At each meeting, we allow time for youth workers to either share materials they have found helpful, or to ask others for helpful hints and ideas.

Our program calendar runs from May to April of each year. BLOC Heads meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of the month. Brochures about our meetings are handed out to synod churches 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. Meetings always begin with a fellowship lunch at noon. After lunch, we will proceed to the host church to share a devotion, followed by the presentation. Meetings conclude with prayer and time to network and share ideas with others gathered.

The Jr. & Sr. High School BLOC parties were resurrected this year. The Sr. High BLOC party happened in November 2005 with the Jr. High BLOC parties happening in April 2006. The BLOC parties were at the Comfort Inn in Rochester. The theme was “Pressin’ On” based on Philippians 3:14. Pastor Meg Sander and Reggie Klindworth were our

speakers. Happy Fun Time was the entertainment. The Phil Francis Band and local youth workers were the musicians.

Finally, the ELCA National Youth Gathering is happening, for two separate weeks, in July 2006 in San Antonio, TX. The theme is “Cruzando.” For more information, please go to www.elca.org/gathering.

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 SE MN synod of the ELCA through:

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

In 2005-6 SE MN LACE focused on:

- building relationships among all involved in the ministry of Christian education in the SE MN synod (rostered, lay, and volunteer) and with the BLOC heads
- connecting with all synod churches through a summer mailing of SE MN LACE and National LACE brochures
- sharing our visions for education & leadership with Bishop Usgaard



- regular meeting schedule with topics including Sabbath & spiritual renewal, controversy & conflict resolution, faith formation, reflections on the first annual APCE/LACE convention in St. Louis, MO

LACE meets in Jan, March, May, Sept, and Nov. at various churches in the synod. (Specific date is published in the SE MN LACE brochure.) 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 interest 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 for more information.
- Sign-up for e-mail networking with area Christian educators.
- Brochures are available with the 2006-2007 meeting dates.
- The schedule will also be posted on the synod web-site.

LACE is making plans for a public hearing on the first draft of the ELCA social statement on education, "Our Calling in Education." Please watch the *River Crossings* and synod web site for further information as details become available.

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

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Mankato

Pastor Anne Hokenstad, Campus Pastor

525,600 minutes, 525,000 moments so dear. 525,600 minutes - how do you measure, measure a year?

"Seasons of Love"

From Rent

A Broadway musical poses a question: how is a year measured? Rent's answer: Love.

In the past year we have measured the love of Christ in the following ways:

The Season of Worship:

- Sunday evening worship services: We celebrate The Lord's Supper weekly
- Mid-week ecumenical Lenten services: Word, soup, and bread are shared
- Evening mid-week Lenten services: Students share their faith story with peers.
- Students traveling with Pastor Anne to congregations: Stories of Jesus and LCM~Crossroads are told.

The Season of Service:

- Serving a Saturday noon meal through the Salvation Army's Food-for-Friends program
- Raking leaves with VINE during the autumn Rake the Town event.
- Hosting a Christmas party for marginalized area youth.
- Hosting Habitat for Humanity groups from around the nation.

The Season of Compassion:

- Providing a room for a displaced New Orleans student following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
- Gifting a family with Christmas presents and a holiday meal.
- Providing a tank of gas for 5 needy students when gas prices were higher.
- Gifting a new dad and mom with baby supplies and food for their premature daughter.



The Season of Hope:

- Listening to students who are struggling with life's complexities.
- Preparing weekly home-cooked meals for hungry students
- Voicing God's grace to students through Bible study, pastoral care conversations, and peer dialogue.

How do we measure a year? LCM~ Crossroads' answer: Christ-Love in immeasurable ways.

We, the members of LCM~ Crossroads, give thanks to God for the generous financial support gifted to us by the congregations of the SEMN Synod.

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Winona

**Pastor John Carrier,
Campus Pastor**

"It has been a quiet year in Winona, Minnesota, our home town...." Well, yes and no.

We started out with a major change in August, and as we all know change is challenging, *major* change is.... well, you know, we're Lutherans! The change? New coffeehouse tenants: Mugby Junction. The former operators had outgrown our capacity to house their plans for the future, and so when they left, we were faced with a major renovation, thanks to the edicts of the city engineers and the health department. So, right at the time when we usually are working hard on new programs with new students, our doors were closed. Hence the quiet time.

At the same time, quiet it was *not*. From August 1 - October 16th, with perhaps 4 days' exception, the Lutheran Campus Center in Winona was as busy as AT&T on Mother's Day. Doing much of the work ourselves, and with volunteers especially from Faith Lutheran Church, and not a few from Central as well, we

demolished and replaced walls, floors, ceilings, and windows, and worked with electrical and plumbing contractors, in a near-total makeover of over half of our building. We paved the boulevard with paver blocks, built furniture, painted. Students, with support from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans engaged in several projects.

The upshot of it all is that we now have a truly wonderful and exciting "new" Lutheran Campus Center. The place is great, our new renter is a perfect match for what we want to offer to the University and Winona communities, and we've never had more students, faculty and staff using our Center. But programatically, it is a little slow. If you miss 'em in August-September, you don't get the opportunity to develop the ministry much until the next wave of new students rolls in.

Then again, it's not as if we are just sitting around waiting 'til August. Big projects include establishing an interfaith council at Winona State University, stirring up interest for our coming 100th Anniversary of Lutheran Campus Ministry, and completing our big quadrennial review.

Many thanks to those congregations and individuals who have faithfully remembered us with your financial support, and most especially to the Women of the ELCA, without whom we would have long ago dried up and blown away.

Peace be with us all,
John V. Carrier,
Campus Pastor

Lutheran Men in Mission Russell Tesch, President

- Board met quarterly at the Synod Conference Room, Assissi Heights,



Rochester

- Vision and Mission Statement: Builders of Men for Christ through a Men's Group in every congregation.
- Hosted Synod LMM Event on April 23rd - "Musings With Al" Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's near Owatonna with 135 participants - Devotions by Bishop Harold Usgaard, Keynote address by Al Batt, writer, humorist, ornithologist, and cartoonist for "Dennis the Menace," "The Lockhorns," and "Marmaduke." Joel Nevin, Region 3 representative brought greetings on behalf of the ELCA Lutheran Men in Mission. Special Music was provided by Rollie Kittelson from Blooming Prairie.
- Attended the July 2005 Lutheran Men's Gathering in Charleston, South Carolina, "Running the Race: Keep the Faith."
- Committed to Men's Ministry Leadership Development and starting/restarting congregational men's ministries through distribution of Master Builders Bibles For Men.
- Planning fourth annual Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's on Saturday, April 22, 2006- "Faith and Athletics" featuring Dan Kosmoski, St. Olaf's head basketball coach

Women of the ELCA

Mary Sue Dale, President

The two Conferences of Presidents were attended in both San Antonio and Chicago.

We continue to work with the Southeastern Minnesota *Sal y Luz* Community partnering with Lutheran World Relief, Justapaz, and Peace Sanctuary Churches in Colombia. Doing advocacy work, we helped to finish the documentation of the history of the Peace Sanctuary Churches. We have hosted visitors from these churches from

Zambrano, Tierralta, and Sincelejo.

The Spring Conference

Events/Retreats were well attended. This is an important link with many women, and the board is thankful for the ministry it provides.

"*Women's Day at Good Earth Village*" at Good Earth Village was filled to capacity as the camp staff, pastors, and others provided the programs that included the new Bible Study overview, worship, music, style shows, and women of the Bible.

We were blessed to have Alice Goemann and her committee as promoters for the 2005 Triennial Gathering. Our synod ended up with the largest representation of any synod! There were nine delegates that represented us well.

In the fall of 2004, Rev. Glenn Nycklemoe, introduced the Fund for Leaders in Mission. The SWO board voted to establish a Scholarship Fund with a \$25,000 goal to be matched by August 31, 2005, by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans at \$.50 on each dollar given. The goal was exceeded by \$98.00.

At our Synod Convention, which is held every two years, had the theme, "*Speak boldly, Act boldly*". We had a number of wonderful speakers, acknowledged the faithful service of our out going board members, and installed the new and continuing members.

Three Fall Conference Leadership Workshops focused on developing leadership skills and seeing how best we can use the resources available through the Churchwide Women of the ELCA. This provides an opportunity for every woman who is interested in women's mission and ministry to SPEAK BOLDLY and ACT BOLDLY on their faith in Jesus Christ.