

Shirley Gangstad

Synod Vice President

Greetings!

With a large number of new synod council members this year, we focused on orienting our council to the organization and structure of the synod and synod staff and on our synod ministry partners. Representatives of the Minnesota Council of Churches, Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota, Lutheran Campus Ministry—Minnesota, Christ Through Hands Ministry in Faribault, and Region 3 each explained their mission and ministry. This personal contact strongly impacted our budget discussions when we had to consider cutting our budget contributions to these ministries for 2009 as we know the good work that can be done, needs to be done, and needs our funding in order to happen.

We also had our annual consultation with a churchwide representative, Rev. Craig Settlage. With reorganization occurring in the churchwide structure, Rev. Stephen Bouman is now the director of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Ministry division. Rev. Settlage explained the importance of the relationship between the three expressions of our church—congregations, synods, churchwide and led a discussion of our working together under the new ELCA theme: God's work, our hands.

Our synod recognized Nile Our Savior Chapel of Faribault as our first synodically authorized worshipping community. This group of Sudanese immigrants makes its home at Our Savior, Faribault, and is led by Wal Reat who is part of the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) program to become an ELCA pastor.

We encouraged and supported Bishop

Usgaard in his sabbatical this summer and again in his trip to the Middle East in January with the Conference of Bishops. We celebrated with Carolyn Goulet on her retirement from the Program Assistant position in the synod office after more than ten years of service, and we welcome Kari MacIver to that position.

One of the more significant beginnings of this past year was our decision to participate in a Missional Discernment Process led by Rev. Scott Olson, Winona. As his Doctor of Ministry thesis project, Rev. Olson prepared a brief questionnaire for congregational members. These were read and discussed by the synod council and other synod representatives. A task force has been formed with the intention of creating our next strategic plan. Watch for more information on this process throughout 2009.

We are beginning a process of Mission Interpretation throughout the synod, hoping to find someone in each congregation to inform and explain the many missions and ministries of the ELCA.

Serving as your synod vice president is a marvelous opportunity to participate in our church in all three expressions. I am truly blessed to be able to serve God, our Church, our synod, and you all from this one position.

Blessings in Christ,
Shirley



Notice to Assembly of Synod Council Action

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary

The following revisions are made to required provisions by action of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. The revisions require no action and are printed here for information purposes.

1. †S8.12.e
Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons **on the rosters of this synod** called by the Church Council ~~on the rosters of this synod~~.
2. †S13.23
Provision 9.71. of the ELCA constitution shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. **This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the**

synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall re-convey the property to the synod.

3. †S15.32
This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

The Synod Council may make changes to continuing resolutions between assemblies. Continuing resolution S11.06.C03 was revised by the Synod council at its meeting November 21, 2008. This revisions recognizes the closing of the Lay School of Theology.

S11.06.C0308 (page 23)
There shall be a Congregational Renewal Team. This team shall deal with the following: promote healthy, growing, mission-minded congregations; encourage and support the clustering of congregations for evangelism, service, ministry and mission; facilitate the renewal of congregations through mentoring and resourcing; encourage and support leadership development of the Lutheran Youth Organization; ~~oversee the Lay School of Theology~~. The team shall be made up of five members elected for two year terms by the Synod Assembly. Members may serve two terms.





The following revisions are recommended to the bylaws. The Synod Assembly needs to vote on bylaw changes.

1. S12.01.05
Each conference shall elect a dean, a secretary, and other officers as necessary who shall serve no more than two full two-year terms consecutively. ~~If the dean is a rostered person, then the secretary shall be a layperson. If the secretary is rostered, then the dean shall be a layperson. The terms of the dean and the secretary shall coincide.~~ **Either lay or clergy may be elected to these positions.**
2. S11.14.05 Distribution of Income
 - a. Restricted income shall be distributed according to the wishes of the donor.
 - b. Unrestricted assets from the fund shall be distributed annually and at such other times as deemed necessary or feasible to accomplish the ~~following~~ **purposes of enhancing the mission:**
 1. ~~Minimum of 20 percent~~ For outreach into the community and synod, including, but not limited to, new ministry starts and congregational revitalization.
 2. ~~Minimum of 20 percent~~ For missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in this continent and worldwide, including, but not limited to, companion synods of Colombia and Tanzania.
 3. ~~e. Minimum of 20 percent~~ For professional leadership to include rostered personnel continuing education, sabbaticals,

professional church workers' continuing education, lay school of theology and seminary debt retirement.

4. ~~d. Up to 40 percent for any one or all of the above designated areas in any proportion as determined by the committee, or~~ For causes and programs which at the discretion of the committee are consistent with the fund purpose of enhancing the mission outreach of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Programs for support shall be recommended by the committee and approved by the synod council according to committee guidelines.
 - c. Disbursement of income from the fund need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the committee sufficient to utilize total income available, or if in the judgment of the committee total annual disbursement of income is not recommended.

Proposed By-law change:

Council Action

SC08.09.06 to adopt the resolution regarding Nile Our Savior Chapel as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community.

WHEREAS Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Faribault has recognized Nile Our Savior's as a ministry of Our Savior's to the Sudanese; and

WHEREAS Nile Our Savior's is in the process of meeting all the criteria laid out in the Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities (adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America April 6, 2003 and updated April 14, 2007).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council authorize Nile Our Savior's Chapel, Faribault as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) for a period of one year to be reviewed annually; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Bishop Harold Usgaard authorized Wal Reat as the Synodically Authorized Lay Minister for Nile Our Savior's Chapel.

The Synod Council proposes the following addition to the bylaws of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Constitution:

S7.21.04 A Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, authorized by the synod council, may elect two lay members of the worshipping community who shall serve as voting members.

S7.21.05 A Synodically Authorized Lay Minister serving a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community shall be a voting member.

Congregational Renewal Team – Synod Council Rev. Roger Claxton, Chair

We hope you have heard about and have become involved with the Bible Book of Faith Initiative of the ELCA. This is an intentional effort to help all of us in the ELCA to enter into reading and knowing more about the Bible. Check the website, www.bookoffaith.org, for more information and ideas. We hope to have 75% of our congregations participating in some local way.

We continue to be involved with Natural Church Development, and coaching for congregations in their life and ministry. Check www.ELCA.org/Growing-in-Faith/Discipleship/Evangelizing-Church.aspx for more ideas and information for growth. We are also assisting some congregations with grant money for specific evangelism projects.

Rural Ministry is a concern for our team. Some of us have participated in workshops focusing on the present and future of rural ministry issues. We are in a time of transition and challenges, but also a time for creativity. Check www.ELCA.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Rural-Ministry.aspx. Historically, the rural areas have been on the leading edge of creativity and innovation in our land. Why change now?

We are also involved with developing recommendations for congregations for “safe church” policies and practices to foster safe boundaries for all of our congregations.

We thank you for your continuing prayers week by week in the synod wide Prayer Calendar program.



Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team – Synod Council

Karen Ortloff, Chair

The Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team helps support and train congregational leaders, provides support for the recruitment of pastors, AIMs and church staff; and oversees the First Call Theological Education Program and Theological Conference.

We accepted the recommendation from the Lay School of Theology Board to discontinue the Lay School program due to declining attendance. We hope to replace it with other leadership development experiences that might include topic studies, mentoring of leaders to leaders-in-training, weekend spiritual retreats, or some form of experiential learning such as day mission service or spiritual coaching. These ideas will be documented, assessed, and revised according to what Pastors deem feasible.

The Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team hosted the Council as Leaders event at Trinity Lutheran Church, Owatonna on March 29, 2009. Guest Speaker was Craig VanGelder from Luther Seminary discussing “Healthy Missional Churches.” This educational event continues to be well received by synod congregations.

Our committee oversees other synodical leadership functions as well. Dr. Susan Briehl was the speaker for the Fall Theological Conference in Mankato. Revs. Ann Sieverling, Charles Ortloff, and Kathie Nykelmoe provide Spiritual Direction education in the synod. Rev. Jim Alquist facilitates the “Partnering for Pastoral Excellence” program at Gustavus and Luther colleges. There is also ongoing evaluation of Synod’s Minimum Salary Guidelines.

Mission Planning and Action Team – Synod Council

Craig Nelson, Chair

Our team interprets the mission of the synod with the assistance of the ELCA churchwide organization; explores and assists new ministry starts within the synod; and seeks to assist congregations to discern their calling to address the needs in society.

This year we welcomed four new members to our team and continued to follow and support three newer ministry starts in the synod at Eyota, Rochester and Northfield. The team has established a liaison with a group in Rochester studying a new ministry between Rochester and Pine Island.

In August we held a team retreat and study session with the assistance of ELCA Research and Evaluation. We reviewed demographic and statistical information about the synod and its congregations. Our attention was drawn to a Sudanese ministry at Our Savior in Faribault and the possibility of a new ministry start at the Northfield Retirement Community.

In September the team asked the synod council to support a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community known as Nile Our Savior’s Chapel in Faribault; Wal Reat’s ministry and participation in Theological Education for Emerging Ministries at Luther Seminary; and a new ministry at the Northfield Retirement Community.

In November the synod council helped categorize the concerns and excitement disclosed in a questionnaire sent to the churches in the synod. Pr. Scott Olson, as part of a mission discernment project, will help the synod create a plan for the future.





Committee on Candidacy

Dr. Noel R. Peterson, Chair

The Committee on Candidacy provides support, counsel and encouragement of candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA. It uses churchwide requirements and expectations as it determines 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 sees itself in a partnership with the candidates, congregations, synod and seminaries to achieve these goals. In doing so, members have the blessing of following the ELCA's next generation of leaders as they progress through their education.

In 2008 the committee approved eight individuals for entrance to seminary, and there were, in total, 38 candidates from this synod preparing for ordained, commissioned, or consecrated diaconal ministries in the ELCA. The committee continues to be encouraged by the high quality and readiness of the candidates.

The committee is blessed with outstanding members. Committee members in 2008 were: Jan Boe, Rev. Steve Bohling, Rev. Mark Boorsma, Rev. Joseph Crippen, Rev. Eric Finsand, Rev. Richard Jorgensen, Virginia Larsen, Patti Mathews, Noel Peterson, Rev. Linda Gunderson (synod staff), Rev. Craig Boehlke (Region 3), and Rev. Mark Granquist (Luther Seminary). Rev. Bohling and Ms. Mathews completed their terms on the committee in 2008. We are thankful for their faithful service.

Special thanks go to Miri Mattson, synod support staff. Miri's kindness, encouraging support and ability to assure that the candidacy process proceeds efficiently and accurately have been a blessing to the committee and candidates.

Endowment Committee

Rev. Sarah Nietz, Chair

The focus of the Synod Endowment committee continues to be the support of leadership in our synod. The two main areas of funding from the Endowment in 2008 were scholarships for seminary students from Southeastern Minnesota and debt retirement grants for pastors serving in their first year of their first call in our synod. In 2008, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Fund for Leaders in Mission Scholarship Recipients were: Barbara Streed (who was awarded the scholarship from the Southeastern Minnesota Women of the ELCA Endowment Fund) and Brandon Simonson (who was awarded the scholarship from the Rev. Elmer and Adella Valen Endowment Fund and the General Fund of the Southeastern Minnesota Fund for Leaders in Mission). Each was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship to be applied to tuition during the 2008-2009 academic year.

First Call Debt Retirement awards were given to the following pastors in 2008: Rev. David Krinke, Rev. Ronald Myers, Rev. Karen Pahl, and Rev. Patrick Patterson. Each received a \$1,250 grant to be applied to educational debt accumulated during their seminary years. These awards come from the ELIM Endowment Fund of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Endowment Fund. One of these grants has been made possible by a designated scholarship in memory of Rev. Walter Wahl and his wife Blanche.

Due to a generous grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council, the Endowment will also be able to begin funding one sabbatical for a synod pastor (and the offsetting costs to his/her congregation) in the near future.

Global Mission/ Companion Synods

Jane Rinehart, Chair

The Global Mission/Companion Synods Committee works with our companions in the Central Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO). Forty-eight synod congregations have partner congregation relationships, and 54 have Missionary Sponsorships.

Colombian Partnership:

- Recruited/funded the first synod-supported English teacher to CELCO, a Lutheran grade school
- Coordinated a delegation of people from the synod, churchwide staff, & South Carolina Synod staff
- Supported Lutheran World Relief advocacy efforts
- Coordinated visits for Rev. Jairo Suarez, IELCO Director of the Office of Human Rights, with Rep. Tim Walz & synod congregations

Tanzanian Partnership:

- Supported Revs. Steve Bohling & Roger Michaelson to teach at Lutheran Institute Kiomboi (LIK) for three months
- Supported an administrative visit by Kathy Bolin & Rev. Mark Johnson, Partner Congregation Team chair
- Financially supported several Lutheran Mission Cooperation approved projects, including an HIV/AIDS program, poverty eradication program development, a staff house renovation, and the purchase of motorcycles for three pastors
- Sent funds for Iambi Hospital & Nursing School; Land Restoration Project at LIK; scholarships for 31 students, & gifts to partner congregations

We are grateful for the prayerful and financial support of synod congregations, which makes this work possible.

Hunger Task Force

Rev. Clark Cary Chair

2008 was truly a year of focus on hunger for our entire Synod. Under the theme “A Synod at Table with the Hungry” our goal was to raise \$500,000 toward the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and an additional \$500,000 for other hunger and poverty related programs. We challenged individuals, congregations, and conferences to give locally, domestically, and globally. Congregations were encouraged to contribute to local food shelves, the ELCA Hunger Appeal, Crop Walks, and all charitable organizations working to alleviate hunger. We also encouraged congregations to report to the synod office all gifting which would be added to our goal. Many congregations did so.

The Synod Assembly in April 2008 specifically focused on the synod’s theme with nine different workshops and with two key speakers - Rev. David Beckmann from Bread For the World and Bishop Peter Rogness of the St. Paul Area Synod. Throughout the year numerous articles in *River Crossings* as well as presentations to the five conferences highlighted the efforts to raise the \$1 million. The results of our shared efforts totaled well over \$625,346.47.

As a Task Force, we offer our thanks for the tremendous response. There is much more that we can do together. Therefore we encourage congregations to participate in a Hunger 101 Workshop, become more aware and involved through Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota, and the Ending Poverty in Minnesota by 2020. Our continued commitment to Hunger and Poverty related issues in 2009 through our financial generosity and advocacy must be a priority among Christ’s people.





Sabbatical Committee Rev. Mark Dumke, Chair

Your Synod Sabbatical Committee, consisting of Revs. Peter Nycklemoe, Mike Lockerby, Dick Hegel, Meg Sander and Mark Dumke, with staff support from Rev. Linda Gunderson, works to strengthen the ministry of pastors, lay professionals and congregations by providing guidance and financial support for sabbatical time.

Four applications were approved for full funding in 2009. Applicants may receive up to \$2,000 (salary and benefits to continue). The applicant's congregation may receive up to \$2,000 for ministry support during the three-month sabbatical. Funds available for sabbatical support may vary from year to year. Application forms are available from the synod office or can be downloaded from the synod website ("Most Popular Downloads").

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."

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Network Kris Oppegard

In the spring of 2008, a group of LACE (Lutheran Association of Christian Educators) and BLOC (Building Lives on Christ) church ministry professionals decided to combine as a unified Children, Youth & Family networking group. We would move into the future as a combined organization that continues to focus on networking and resourcing, open to all CYF professionals in our synod. Through our fellowship lunches and meetings, we strive to foster relationships among our synod Children, Youth & Family ministry professionals, thereby creating a community of support for one another.

In the last year, we've met around a variety of topics from Bible Studies to Resource Sharing and the "Annual Lunch with the Bishop" to Luther Seminary with Terri Elton.

The synod CYF meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of the month, August-May. Brochures are available at the CYF table at the Synod Assembly or at www.semnsynod.org. Monthly e-mails are sent out concerning meeting details. To be added to the e-mail list, e-mail trinityyouthrock@yahoo.com. Meetings always begin with a "bring your own lunch" at 11:30 a.m. At 12:30 p.m. we begin our time with devotion, followed by the program topic. Meetings conclude, with prayer, by 2:00 p.m.

The 2009 ELCA National Youth Gathering is in New Orleans, LA, July 22-26, with a new and improved service piece! I am serving again as the Synod Coordinator. Our synod has over 1,100 people going to the Gathering, with 15 coach busses filled with groups traveling to the Gathering together. More information at www.ELCA.org/gathering

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Mankato

Rev. Kyle Halverson,
Interim Campus Pastor

Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry, serving Minnesota State University, Mankato, has been in a year of rebuilding. Going through four gifted pastors in six years has put us in a transitional zone, so the Minnesota Lutheran Campus Ministry Board decided on a fresh start to rebuild the ministry. Crossroads has begun a two or three year Intentional Interim Ministry with Rev. Kyle Halverson as the Interim Pastor.

Rev. Halverson has a background in Campus Ministry. His seminary internship was at Gustavus Adolphus College where he caught the campus ministry bug. Most recently he served as a mission developer at an experimental “emergent” ministry in the Twin Cities. Currently he is working on a PhD in Theology at Luther Seminary and dividing time between Mankato and St. Paul.

During the interim, Crossroads is laying a foundation for future stability. We called a new Campus Ministry Board. We continue to bring a stable presence of Word and Sacrament ministry. We also maintain programs established in the past - Sunday night worship, Wednesday night meals, Bible Study, and cooperative programming with ecumenical partners. We are also connecting and re-connecting with local congregations

Visit www.lmcrossroads.com to learn more about us. Be sure to sign up for our e-newsletters to see what we’re doing.

Crossroads is an open portal through which the spirit of God moves - engaging us, reconciling others, reaching out through us to love and serve the community at Minnesota State University, Mankato. What a privilege!

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Winona

Rev. John Carrier,
Campus Pastor

Jesus commands us to bring in those who are left out, so when a young man with piercings, tattoos, and other signs of having been in a few “dark places,” began a relationship with us, we welcomed him.

The Lutheran Campus Center’s mission is to Welcome; Invite; Send; Engage. So we *welcomed* him and his friends. *Invited* them to be a part of our worshipping community. *Sent* them into the campus communities to spread the Word. *Engaged* them in Bible study, prayer, and the faith struggles that challenge this generation.

He developed as a leader. He was making progress as a citizen and as a disciple. I was involved in his probation and outpatient therapy (his “dark places” included prison).

It all was going well until he started inching back into trouble, leading a double life. The Church is full of people who have both a public side, and a private person behind the façade. Luther coined it *simul justus et peccator*: simultaneously saint and sinner. But this young man’s “sinner” side included the criminal.

When I discovered what was going on, it was up to me to be both his pastor and a mandatory reporter. It is painful and sad to send one of your “children” to jail, but for the sake of all it had to be done. I found myself straddling both Law and Gospel. So it goes in campus ministry, with real risks that sometimes pay off, and at other times do not.

Knowing what we know now, would we again take a chance on someone whom everyone else had already discarded? In a heartbeat. For, “while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.”





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 Sixth Annual Synod LMM Event on April 26 – “Faith and Citizenship” Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's near Owatonna with over 110 participants - Devotions by Bishop Harold Usgaard, Keynote inspirational address by John Hanson, a school instructor who received the 2008 VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award, and is involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He spoke about young people's faith what it means to be a good citizen in America.
- Attended the Coming of Age 2008 Lutheran Men's Gathering, August 1-3 in Omaha, Nebraska, where 600 men and youth came together in Jesus Christ, to serve, play, learn, worship, encounter God and each other, and grow! We had four men serving as delegates from our synod. During the business session, Rick Jacobson (507-325-2496) Lyle, Minnesota, was elected to serve as Region 3 representative on the national board, and is looking for opportunities to speak and assist in promoting men's congregational ministry and Bible Studies.
- Lutheran Men in Mission stepped into its new status as an incorporated financially self reliant ministry oh the church in 2008.
- April 18, 2009, was the date of the Seventh Annual Synod LMM Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's.

Women of the ELCA

Kathy Tanabe, President

I am happy to report that the Women of the ELCA is indeed alive and well and very busy! All those who had the opportunity to go to our Churchwide Triennial in Salt Lake City in July 2008 came back energized and looking forward to Spokane, Washington in July 2011. In addition to what's going on in each individual congregation, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Women of the ELCA has sponsored Fall Workshops, have supported our Conferences' Spring Meetings (also part of the Synodical Expression) and have been blessed by Woman's Day at Good Earth Village, sponsored for us by the camp. Last Spring we began fundraising for Good Earth Village, Churchwide, and the Agape Women's Retreat Center in Singita, Tanzania by selling the very popular Lucinda Pins at all of our events, half of the cost goes toward the fundraising.

Our 11th Woman's Day at Good Earth will be on June 20, 2009, always a fun event filled with music, entertainment and the introduction to next year's "Lutheran Woman Today" Bible Study. From Friday evening September 25, 2009 through mid-afternoon on Saturday, September 26, 2009 we hope to fill Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester with our Southeastern Minnesota ELCA Convention. We will have workshops, inspirational speakers, worship, food of course and much time to fellowship.

Remember that any woman can come to any of these events, they aren't offered just for Women of the ELCA Synodical and Church Board members. Come and learn what's happening in the church beyond your congregational walls.