

Shirley Gangstad

Synod Vice President

Greetings!

This has been a year of changes in our office—both physical changes and personnel changes. With the advice and support of the Mayo Clinic staff, our office underwent total renewal. This involved very little structural change but a total redecorating and nearly a total reconfiguring of our space at Assisi Heights. If you have not stopped in for a tour of the new “digs,” please feel free to stop in some time when you are in the area and I am certain you will be able to get a guided tour.

In personnel, Katie Butler, our Communications Director, has survived her first year of “on the job training” and added her personal touches to make the position her own. She continues to meet monthly with the Communicators and that enhances communication both at the synod and the congregational level. The biggest change in personnel occurred when Rev. Audree Catalano left her position as Synod Minister/Assistant to the Bishop to return to parish ministry in Forest Park, IL. She left in mid-September and the Bishop along with the Executive Committee decided not to fill her position until after the election of the bishop at the synod assembly. This also enabled us to try some more creative ways of accomplishing the tasks that had been part of her job description.

The synod council updated our Publication Policy and the Executive Committee is currently working on updating our constitution and personnel policy manual. These are tasks that need to be completed on a regular schedule as many little things change that need to be kept current in the documents that govern our actions. The synod council hopes that congregations will be vigilant in updating

their constitutions and operating policies as well. They are mostly dust collectors on a shelf somewhere, but if/when a crisis comes, having updated documents is of enormous help in sorting things out.

In September, 2006, the council had Mark Herman lead us in discussion and activities to review our actions as a council. With Mr. Herman’s guidance, the council began discussion to review the entire budgeting process of the synod, the responsibilities of synod council members, and our communication—both within the synod council itself and between the council and congregations and members who make up the synod. This is an ongoing process that already has resulted in some changes and no doubt will precipitate more changes in the future.

An exciting occurrence in the synod this year is the reemergence and revitalization of the Lutheran Youth Organization. Check our synod website for ways that your congregation and its youth can be involved!

I continue to be blessed by being able to serve the Bishop, the synod staff and you in my position as vice president. Let us continue to Make Christ Known as we are Called Into God’s Marvelous Light!

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 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.



Congregational Renewal Team – Synod Council

Beth Krehbiel, Chair

The Congregational Renewal Team works with congregations to promote healthy, growing, mission- minded congregations.

In 2007 our synod is focusing on a “Sharing our Faith Stories.” We offer monthly articles in *River Crossings* and the E-News contains quick thoughts to stimulate individuals’ sharing.

We continue with Natural Church Development. The seven congregations involved are in the second phase of this process with the goal to increase the overall health of the congregation.

We encourage congregations to apply for Evangelism Outreach Grants. We awarded grants to six congregations in 2006 for a variety of ideas, including an educational speaker on evangelism and a summer picnic to celebrate the life and ministry of the congregation with the whole community. One congregation invited people to engage in active prayer throughout their community.

We continue to support the BLOC Heads (Building Lives On Christ - synod youth workers) and LACE (Lutheran Association of Christian Educators) in their work to support youth workers and Christian educators in our synod.

In 2007 our focus will be to develop:

- greater awareness of world hunger
- opportunities for rural ministry enhancement
- deeper stewardship growth

On behalf of the synod, thank you to the members of the Congregational Renewal Team for your hard work and faithfulness. We especially thank Cathy Mannel for her service as she leaves the team.

We ask for your ideas, questions and thoughts about congregational renewal as we do this important work together.

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.

Our team continues to explore ways to promote the “Call to Ministry. We are also continuing to promote and enhance the spiritual well-being of our clergy within the synod. Both of these ministries are developing and will blossom in the next few years.

The Lay Leadership and Development Team hosted the "Council As Leaders" program at Trinity in Owatonna on March 25. Special Guest was Dr. Craig Nesson from Wartburg Seminary speaking on the paradigm shift in ministry from 'membership to discipleship.' This type of leadership education program continues to be well received by the synod congregations.

We spent considerable time in reviewing the 2008-09 Salary Guidelines. In November 2006 we held three meetings throughout the synod to discuss salary needs and concerns. Based upon those meetings we developed a two year guidelines to give more flexibility to the congregation and to help in future budgeting. We will continue to listen to the needs of the congregations, clergy and staff throughout the synod and respond with appropriate guidelines for all.





Mission Planning and Action Team – Synod Council Ann Beatty, Chair

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, meeting Sunday afternoons at Zumbro Lutheran in Rochester. Through presentations from the various pastors to our committee we have been informed of their visions and concerns and updated on their needs for coming years. These continue to be very exciting and important months for these growing congregations and we will continue to monitor their progress and pray for their needed support. The committee is 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 team 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 ongoing 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. The Committee acts on behalf of the ELCA and 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 is in a partnership with the candidates, congregations, synod and seminaries to achieve these goals.

In 2006 the Committee approved ten individuals for entrance to seminary. The Committee continues to be encouraged by the high quality and readiness of the candidates.

The Committee is blessed with outstanding members, dedicated to service to the ELCA and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Thank you to each of them.

In 2006 Rev. Audree Catalano returned to parish ministry. We are thankful for her hard work and cheerful demeanor while she served the committee. We wish her well in her new congregation.

A special word of thanks goes to Beth Gabriel at the Synod office. Her organizational skills and encouraging support have been a blessing to the committee and to the candidates. Another special word of thanks goes to Miri Mattson. After Audree's departure, she helped to provide the necessary contact and support for seminarians and especially those who were just entering the process, work that she has done with skill and a kind heart.

Endowment Committee

Pastor Sarah Nietz, Chair

It has truly been a year of “telling the story” for the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Endowment Committee, as we have worked to show how the Lutheran community’s generosity leads to furthering Christ’s mission in the world.

Thanks to a grant received from Thrivent for Lutherans, Les Horntvedt (a “gifts coordinator”) and a committee of dedicated lay and clergy members have planned and implemented several projects to raise up awareness of what financial giving can do to strengthen leaders in our church:

- A CD production highlighting the church’s need for leaders and the way that sabbatical funding, debt relief dollars and gifts to Good Earth Village support such leaders;
- A series of dinners hosted for potential partners in mission;
- Two workshops by John Reihl on Church Stewardship;
- Bus trips to ELCA churchwide offices and Luther Seminary for those interested in seeing the church at work raising up leaders (a trip to Good Earth Village is planned for June 27th);
- Personal visits to interested individuals.

As in past years, this committee continues to award debt relief funds to first call pastors and present scholarship funds to SE MN Synod Seminary students. We are pleased to announce a new award this year made possible by the Pastor Walter and Blanche Wahl Clergy Development Fund.

May the year ahead indeed be one of telling the story of Christ in word and deed.

Global Mission/ Companion Synods

Jane Rinehart, Chair

Many things happened in 2006. Bishop Sijifredo Buitrago, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, and Bishop Eliophoo Sima, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - Central Diocese, visited and both Companion Synod Covenants were renewed.

Seven people from the synod visited Colombia. This is the first delegation to go to Colombia in recent years due to the civil conflict. We are hope to have more delegations in the future.

Several groups visited the Central Diocese of Tanzania in the past year. Thirteen people from Christ, First English, and Our Savior’s Lutheran Churches in Faribault visited their partner congregations and attended the consecration of Bishop Sima. Bethel Lutheran, Rochester, worked on three dispensaries, an ongoing partner project. Rev. David Hernes, East Freeborn Lutheran Church, taught for three months at the Lutheran Institute Kiomboi. Kathy Bolin, Global Mission/Companion Synods (GMCS) Coordinator, and Jane Rinehart, GMCS Committee Chair, went to review projects, update project priorities and strengthen relationships. The Central Diocese asks for support of an increased focus on education. The diocese is creating an Educational Trust Fund to provide scholarships to students and asked for the synod and partner congregations to focus support on this effort. Rev. Edward Gyunda is visiting our synod April-June 2007.

Several new congregation partnerships have been established. A Companion Synod Congregational Partnership Team was created to work on starting and maintaining partnerships.

Thank you for continued generous support to a wide variety of local, regional and global missions.





Lay School of Theology Board

Kathy Bolin, Administrator

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod's Lay School of Theology continued its work in 2006 "to equip the children of God for ministry in their congregations and in their daily lives." (Lay School of Theology mission statement). All of God's people are called to be partners with God in creation through our work, whatever that may be, which Luther said, is the "mask" of God. It is said that God does not call the equipped, He equips the called.

The Lay School of Theology offered several extra opportunities during 2006 in participation of the synod's focus on Bible Study. In addition to the annual January, March, July and September sessions, events were offered in April, October, November and December. Due to limited registration the April, July, and November sessions were canceled. Lay School sessions continue to attract people from across the synod, some of whom have attended all sessions since the first session was held in November 2000. There are always first time attendees at sessions as well as a core group of frequent participants. Sessions offered in 2006 included the Augsburg Confession, ministry skills, the Church in Acts, the Sacraments, a study of Romans, Spirituality of the Psalms, Daniel, and Perspectives on Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke. An average of twenty people attend the sessions. All are welcome!

Sabbatical Committee

Pastor Mark Dumke, Chair

Your Synod Sabbatical Committee, consisting of pastors Gary Benson, Mike Lockerby, Dick Hegal, Meg Sander and Mark Dumke, with Synod support from Beth Gabriel, 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."

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. Three applications were approved for full funding in FY 2007. Application forms are available at www.semnsynod.org (under "Most Popular Downloads").



BLOC Heads

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

Kris Oppegard

BLOC is a network of youth workers in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod committed to “Building Lives On Christ.” We focus on networking and resourcing with fellow youth workers. Through our fellowship lunches and meetings, we strive to foster relationships among our synod youth workers, thereby creating a community of support for one another.

BLOC Heads meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of the month. Meetings begin with a fellowship lunch and after lunch we share a devotion followed by the program topic. We conclude with prayer and time to network and share ideas with others gathered. Meeting information is available at www.semnsynod.org/BLOC.html and is sent out via e-mail. To be added to the e-mail list, e-mail Kris at trinityyouthrock@yahoo.com

During the 2007-8 year, we will be meeting more regularly with the synod LACE (Lutheran Association of Christian Educators).

In February 2007, 25 people from the synod attended the ELCA Youth Workers Extravaganza in Tampa, FL. The topic was “Open House.” Our group gathered for a wonderful night of conversation and dinner during the Extravaganza.

Jr. & Sr. High BLOC parties were held in 2005-6. In the future, our synod may be teaming up with other Region 3 synods for annual youth gatherings, as well as developing and offering our own BLOC parties.

Please continue to pray for those that work with youth in our synod. The youth are the future of the church! We are on this journey together!

Lutheran Association of Christian Educators (LACE)

Marcia Pedersen

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 Synod through:

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

In 2006-7 we 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 Synod and Churchwide brochures
- sharing our visions for education and leadership in our congregations and at synodical level with Bishop Usgaard and others committed to children, youth and family ministry areas
- regular meetings with topics including Advent/Christmas, Ministry Boundries, Cross-generational Ministry, Scheduling and Recruiting, Curriculum and Lutheranism, reflections on the first annual APCE/LACE convention

The meeting schedule is in our brochure and available at www.semnsynod.org/LACE.html.

Anyone interested in Christian education (rostered, lay, and volunteer) is invited and encouraged to attend.

For more information, visit our display at Synod Assembly or contact Marcia Pedersen at mpedersen@oursaviorsaustin.org



Lutheran Campus Ministry, Mankato

Rev. Dr. Elaine Siemsen,
Campus Pastor

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love...in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,”
Colossians 2:2

Paul describes the diversity of Gospel work with many different people in many different places. Colossians 2:2 also describes the ministry on the campus of Minnesota State University-Mankato. The mission of LCM-The Crossroads is to proclaim the Good News in worship, service, study, laughter, tears, anger, and joy so that all who encounter Christ will be encouraged in heart and united in love.

To accomplish his mission, Paul depended upon human generosity. The mission of The Crossroads depends in part upon the individuals and congregations. Each week as we worship, welcome new students, or gather for prayer, fellowship and supper you are there supporting us.

Support of The Crossroads comes in many ways all of which contribute to our purpose to encourage and unite in God’s love. Thank you for congregational support through monthly and annual gifts and for special gifts from endowment funds. Thank you to the Women of The ELCA who bring encouragement through their generosity. With your help each year many students experience the love of God in Jesus Christ and are changed forever.

We invite you to join with us in all aspects of our ministry: come to worship, to supper, or sign up for our emailed devotions. Finally, please come to the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Campus Ministry at The Crossroads in October 2007. More information is available on our website:
<http://rso.mnsu.edu/lcmcrossroads>

Lutheran Campus Ministry, Winona

Pastor John Carrier,
Campus Pastor

A young man who made some serious mistakes - you probably even read about him in the news - and is now on the right track, attends weekly Bible study and worships every week at the Lutheran Campus Center.

A Muslim, a Jew, two Unitarians, a Hindu, a Buddhist, and a Methodist meet regularly with the Roman Catholic campus minister and Campus Pastor John Carrier at the Lutheran Campus Center. They have now formed an interfaith council in Winona.

When a Winona State University professor is falsely accused of misconduct, the Lutheran Campus Center is where he turns to.

A memorial display, “Eyes Wide Open,” is arranged on campus and in a Winona park. Who is one of the sponsors? The Lutheran Campus Center.

The ecumenical University Christmas Festival of Light concluded where?

Student leaders and faculty from St. Mary’s and Winona State Universities engaged in service learning with the Queen Louise Home for Children - an orphanage of Lutheran Social Service of the Virgin Islands - and worked on important environmental projects at the Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge, plus a professor from Buena Vista college in northwest Iowa also participated so that she could import the program in her setting.

These highlights just barely scratch the surface, in terms of the riches shared by you on a routine basis. Your Lutheran Campus Ministry doing extraordinary and very ordinary mission, pastoral care, and leadership training. Thank you for supporting this vital Lutheran presence on the Winona college campuses.

In Christ’s name, thank you!



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 Fourth Annual Synod LMM Event on April 22nd - "Faith and Athletics" Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's near Owatonna with 140 participants - Devotions by Bishop Harold Usgaard, Keynote inspirational address by Dan Kosmoski, St. Olaf College Basketball Coach. He spoke on how his faith has impacted his work with young people. Joel Nevin, Region 3 representative brought greetings on behalf of the ELCA Lutheran Men in Mission.
- Committed to Men's Ministry Leadership Development and starting/restarting congregational men's ministries through distribution of Master Builders Bibles for Men. We are pleased to report that several new Men's Bible Study Groups are using the Bibles.
- Planned the fifth annual Breakfast with the Bishop at Cabela's on Saturday, April 14, 2007- "Coming of Age: Exploring the Identity and Spirituality of Young Men" with Rollie Martinson, Author, and Professor of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry, Luther Seminary.

Women of the ELCA

Kathy Tanabe, President

The Fall Workshops featured Lynn Gerlach-Collard, Director of Renaissance House in Duluth, who helped put a face to homelessness. Kirsten Anderson-Stembridge, Advocacy Coordinator with Congregational Partnerships and Advocacy for Lutheran Social Service, came and challenged all the Women of the ELCA Congregational Units to raise \$500 each to help eliminate homelessness by 2015. The workshop also included a primer on "Writing Resolutions in 15 Minutes or Less." Every congregation received helps and handouts for their individual congregational boards.

Additional synod projects include encouraging congregational units to support Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota, the Southeastern Minnesota Women of the ELCA Seminary Scholarship Fund, and a new ministry: supporting the Lutheran Agape Social Centre, a project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - Central Diocese. The Centre will serve provide a conference space in the town of Singida, which has a growing need for conference facilities and create a source of income to support economic and social programs for women and to support the staff of the Central Diocese. We are also suggesting individuals and units to open a Mission Investment Fund Account to help Women of the ELCA receive a \$25,000 Triennial Gathering gift.

We are planning for two big events - the Sept. 22, 2007 Southeastern Minnesota Women of the ELCA Convention in Northfield and the Triennial Gathering July 8-13, 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

We are truly blessed in our synod by the service, generosity, and strength of our women as we continue our Triennial themes of "Acting Boldly in Hope" and "Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls."