

Report of the Bishop – Part 1

Commissioning

- Todd Portinga, Associate in Ministry, 11-29-06 to St Olaf, Austin, 11-29-06

Ordinations

- Diane Goulson, 3-25-06 to Chaplain, Northfield Retirement Community, 3-26-06
- Nancy Hansen, 7-2-06 to North Waseca & Faith, Waseca, 7-3-06
- Cary Larson, 6-18-06 to LeSueur River & Vista, New Richland, 6-19-06
- Krista Strum, 1-20-07 to Calvary, Mankato (Rapidan), 1-21-07
- Susan Vikstrom, 6-11-06 to associate, United Redeemer, Zumbrota, 7-1-06

New Calls Within the Synod

- David Berg from St. John, Waseca to Good Shepherd, Rochester, 7-17-06
- Glen Bickford from on leave from call to Bear Creek, Grand Meadow, 4-26-07
- Mark Boorsma from Our Savior, Cleveland to Ascension, Albert Lea, 1-18-07

Calls to Specialized Ministry

- David Beckstrom, Interim at St. Olaf, Austin to Interim, Ascension, Albert Lea, 2-10-06
- Glen Bickford received from Presbyterian Church USA to Interim, St. Luke, Goodhue, 9-12-05
- Glen Bickford, on leave from call to Interim, First, Red Wing, 10-10-06
- Clark Cary, Interim, Ascension, Albert Lea to Interim, United, Red Wing, 2-16-06
- Daniel Dimick, on leave from call to Interim, Gol, Kenyon, 10-01-05

- Dwight DoBell, on leave from call to Minister of Mental Health, Community Presbyterian, Plainview, 3-21-06
- Gerald Giese, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Interim, Good Shepherd, Wells, 9-5-06
- Sandra Griffin, on leave from call to Chaplain, Mankato Lutheran Home, 5-30-06
- Thomas Hanson, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Interim, Good Shepherd, Rochester, 10-27-05
- Terje Hausken, Zwingli UCC, West Concord to Interim, The Congregational Church UCC, Rochester, 6-1-06
- Barbara Jewell, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Interim, Trinity, Blue Earth, 5-15-06
- Lissa Kahl, on leave from call to Interim, St. John, Elkton, 9-30-06
- Luther Peterson, Northwestern Minnesota Synod to Interim, Lands, Zumbrota, 2-1-07
- Elaine Siemsen, Faculty, Saint Olaf College to Campus Pastor, Mankato, 12-1-06
- Peter Soli, Redeemer, Alden to Interim, Oakland & Moscow, Oakland, 10-31-06
- Richard Spande, on leave from call to Interim, Redeemer, Alden, 11-1-06
- Jane Ann Timmerman, on leave from call to Interim Fountain & Root Prairie, 12-1-05
- Lyndon West, on leave from call to Interim, 1st English, Faribault, 12-15-05

Transferred Into the Synod

- Rolf Aaseng, retired, from Minneapolis Area Synod, 1-15-07
- Philip Eaves, retired, from Grand Canyon Synod, 12-1-06



- Paul Forde, from South-Central Synod of Wisconsin to Fountain & Root Prairie, 6-1-06
- Albert Girtz, retired, from Central States Synod, 4-15-06
- Lloyd Gunderson, retired, from Minneapolis Area Synod, 2-1-07
- Ray Heidtke, retired, from Eastern North Dakota Synod, 6-1-06
- David Klawiter, from South Dakota Synod to St. John, Owatonna, 6-1-07
- Darby Lawrence, from Central-Southern Illinois Synod to E & W St Olaf, Byron, 1-8-07
- Julie Malone, from Southwestern Minnesota Synod to associate, Trinity, Owatonna, 10-16-06
- Darren Paulson, from Montana Synod to First, Lake City, 6-19-06
- Lynne Rigg, retired, from Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, 11-16-06
- Paul Thompson, from Northeastern Iowa Synod to Union Prairie, Lanesboro, 6-19-06
- Kristen Venne, from Northeastern Iowa Synod to associate, Messiah, North Mankato, 12-1-06
- Paul Walker, retired, from Northern Illinois Synod, 1-1-07
- Audree Catalano, Synod Minister to Metropolitan Chicago Synod, 10-1-06
- LaDonna Ekern, Oakland & Moscow, Oakland to East Central Synod of Wisconsin, 9-10-06
- John Gannett, on leave from call to Southwestern Minnesota Synod, 9-1-05
- Kathryn Gauger, Interim, E & W St Olaf, Byron to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, 1-15-07
- Thomas Hanson, on leave from call to Saint Paul Area Synod, 8-1-06
- Ray Heidtke retired to Eastern North Dakota Synod, 4-1-07
- Thomas Koelln, Gloria Dei, Rochester to Minneapolis Area Synod, 8-31-06
- Robert Nelson, Lands, Zumbrota to Northwestern Minnesota Synod, 1-16-07
- Terje Ness, Solor, Webster to British Columbia Synod, ELCIC, 5-1-07
- J. Dana Peterson on leave from call to Saint Paul Area Synod, 9-1-06
- Guy Redfield, Missionary in Norway to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, 10-07-06
- Brian Scott, associate, First, Red Wing to Minneapolis Area Synod, 8-6-06
- Ann Sorum, Missionary in Slovakia to Southwest Washington Synod, 10-14-06
- Jonathan Sorum, Missionary in Slovakia to Southwest Washington Synod, 10-14-06
- Christopher Thomforde, President, St. Olaf College to Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, 7-1-06
- Arthur Thorstensen, Jr. retired to Rocky Mountain Synod, 7-1-06
- Laurel Thorstensen, retired to Rocky Mountain Synod, 7-1-06
- Patrick Ziems, associate, St. John, Montgomery to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, 4-30-06

Retired

- Paul Baker, Good Shepherd, Wells, 6-30-06
- Harold (Hal) Deye, Grace, Austin, 5-1-07
- Charles Espe, Vista & LeSueur River, New Richland, 7-1-06
- Glen Leaf, on leave from call, 4-1-06
- Janet Tantow, continuing disability, 5-1-05

Transferred Out of the Synod

- Charles Akre, retired, to Saint Paul Area Synod, 1-1-07
- Jon Becker, on leave from call to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, 8-1-06



On Leave from Call

- David Beckstrom, Interim, Ascension, Albert Lea, 1-8-07
- Glen Bickford, Interim, St. Luke, Goodhue, 11-30-05
- Glen Bickford, Interim, First, Red Wing, 2-3-07
- Mary Sue Dreier, People of Hope, Rochester, 6-5-06
- Stephen Fiksdal, Mabel First, Mabel, 8-1-06
- Daphne Hamborg, disability, 6-15-06
- Thomas Hanson, Interim, Good Shepherd, Rochester, 7-1-06
- Anne Hokenstad, Lutheran Campus Ministry Mankato, 6-9-06
- Cathy Mannel, AIM, Chaplain, St Mark's Home, Austin, 1-1-07
- Greg Mannel, Chaplain, St. Mark's Home, Austin, 1-1-07
- D. Scott McLaughlin, Urland & Wangen Prairie, Cannon Falls, 9-15-06
- J. Dana Peterson, Youth Encounter, Minneapolis, 1-1-06
- Daniel Raaen, Interim, St. Peter's Episcopal, Kasson, 1-1-06
- Roy H. Roger, St. Paul ELCA/UCC, 8-24-06
- Jane Ann Timmerman, Fountain & Root Prairie, Fountain, 5-31-06

Deceased

- Howard Gravrock, March 25, 2007
- Robert Johnson, October 27, 2006
- Charles Solberg, March 26, 2007
- Ansgar Sovik, January 19, 2007
- Walter Wahl, June 13, 2006

Removed from the Roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- Darin Easler, three years on leave from call expired, 8-2-06

Resigned from the Roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- D. Scott McLaughlin, 12-21-06
- Mark Wendland, 4-16-07

Interims

- David Beckstrom, Ascension, Albert Lea, 2/07/06 – 1/07/07
- Glen Bickford, First, Red Wing, 10/10/06 – 1/31/07
- Clark Cary, United, Red Wing, 2/16/06 –
- Clark Cary, Ascension, Albert Lea, 6/07/05 – 2/07/06
- Wade Davick, Highland Prairie & Elstad, Peterson, 3/24/02 –
- Dan Dimick, Gol, Kenyon, 10/01/05 –
- Don Flaten, Immanuel, Wykoff, 12/01/02 –
- Curtis Fox, Mabel First, Mabel, 11/01/06 –
- Kathy Gauger, East/West St Olaf, 10/15/04 – 12/31/06
- Gerry Geise, Good Shepherd, Wells, 9/05/06 –
- John Hagen, Calvary, Rapidan, 12/08/05 – 12/31/06
- Thomas Hanson, Good Shepherd, Rochester, 10/27/05 – 6/21/06
- Peter Huggenvik *, St Paul, Lewiston, 11/01/06 –
- Charles Jacobson, Urland/Wangen Prairie, Cannon Falls, 10/15/06 –
- Arne Jessen, St John, Owatonna, 11/14/05 – 5/13/07
- Minette Johnson *, Henrytown, Canton, 2/15/04 –
- Lissa Kahl, St John, Elkton, 9/03/06 –
- Gail Klavetter, Bear Ck/Grand Meadow, Grand Meadow, 3/14/04 – 4/30/06
- Karl Korbel, North Waseca/Faith, Waseca/ Janesville, 11/22/04 – 6/09/06
- Glenn Leaf, Gloria Dei, Rochester, 4/01/05 – 3/15/06



- Gerry Melby, St Paul, Lewiston, 11/01/06 –
- Luther Peterson, Lands, Zumbrota, 2/17/07 –
- Wayne Radtke, First, Lake City, 8/06/05 – 6/01/06
- Dick Rehfeldt, Gloria Dei, Rochester, 9/19/06 –
- Peter Soli, Oakland/Moscow, Oakland, 10/29/06 –
- Dick Spande, Redeemer, Alden, 11/01/06 –
- Jane Timmerman, Fountain & Root Prairie, Fountain, 12/01/05 – 6/01/06
- Lyndy West, First English, Faribault, 12/15/05 – 2/28/07

* lay person licensed for interim ministry

Report of the Bishop – Part 2

It is all about thanksgiving; it has to be. How can we live without proclaiming the grace and mercy of our God? We live in response to what that God has already done for us. It is, as many have pointed out, about a theology of abundance, about what we have already received. We are a people, as our synod proclaims, that has been “called out of darkness into his marvelous light.” What else can we do but live with thanksgiving?



I find myself echoing that same refrain as I review this past year in our synod. God continues to work in and through the church in southeastern Minnesota, and we who serve in the office in Rochester are privileged to share in such a ministry. Thank you for the partnership we are able to enjoy.

This past year, we, along with Good

Earth Village, were the recipients of two financial grants awarded by Thrivent. One of the grants focuses on “Leadership in the Church: Today and Tomorrow.” Its intent is to offer encouragement to future leaders in the church, and support for those already involved. The goal is to raise the level of endowments both in the synod and at Good Earth Village to the one million dollar level. Pastor Glenn Monson has spearheaded the task force, and Pastor Lester Horntvedt accepted our invitation to work part-time with individual visits and follow-up. Dinners have been held around the synod, DVDs shared with congregations, and trips planned for potential donors to become more acquainted with the ELCA and its seminaries.

The second grant has enabled Good Earth Village to birth the Youth Servant Leader Institute (YSLI). This is an opportunity for youth from around our synod to gain servant leadership training, and to apply it both in their home congregations and in the greater church. One can’t help but be impressed by the youth already involved, and the goal this year is to triple the number involved. Dayna Clemment has done excellent work as chief cheerleader and program coordinator.

2006 was a year for our synod to be involved in Bible study. It was exciting to visit congregations and see the variety of opportunities offered. Those who attended last year’s synod assembly not only thrilled to the study on Revelation offered by Dr. Craig Koester, but took advantage of over twenty Bible studies offered by pastors from our synod. What impressed me was how those pastors quickly and willingly volunteered to create and lead those studies. It is going to be exciting in these coming years as the entire ELCA



begins a special focus on the Bible as our book of faith.

Another focus during the past year was to address the spiritual health of our synod's rostered leaders. Pastors Kathie Nycklemoe and Charles Ortloff offered encouragement and resources at each of our rostered conference meetings. Dr. Bradley Hanson of the Grace Institute was also the featured speaker at our annual Theological Conference. Too often in serving others we discover that we ourselves are in need of spiritual enrichment. We dare not take for granted the spiritual health and well being of our leaders.

John Petersburg, who chairs the synod's Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team, led a series of workshops around the synod focusing on compensation and benefits guidelines. This is an area that has increasingly become a focus of confusion, even disagreement in our congregations. As resources seem less available in congregations, concern is raised about expenses - and certainly salaries and benefits do not escape scrutiny. Again, the financial compensation and support for our rostered leaders cannot be an area that is taken for granted. I believe the Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team work hard presenting guidelines that are fair both to leaders and congregations. What I do not think is fair is to expect our leaders to "pay" for what seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge the abundance in our lives.

Our Global Mission/Companion Synod Committee continues to develop our relationships with Christ's church around the world. Our relationship with the Lutheran Church in Tanzania continues to grow. Many from our synod have had the opportunity to visit and even

work with the church in Tanzania. Last summer we welcomed their new bishop, Bishop Sima, to our synod. And now Pastor Edward Gyunda will be spending three months in our midst.

But 2006 also brought a renewal of our relationship with the Lutheran Church in Colombia. Safety concerns have limited our exchanges in the past. But this last fall, a contingent from our synod visited in what is hoped might be the first of many annual visits. We were privileged to be part of the 70th anniversary of Lutheran ministry in Colombia, and were welcomed at the National Retreat Center which was built through efforts of congregations in our synod. Yes, we offer resources to these churches, but it does not compare to the lessons in faith that they offer us.

What is also exciting is to see the ongoing mission efforts in our own midst. Congregations continue to ask the question of God's intentions for them. How do we participate in God's work around us? Such questions have led to renewed efforts in congregational renewal, and support of new mission efforts nearby. Thank you for the support you continue to offer Peace in Eyota, Rejoice! in Northfield, and Glory to God in Rochester. Perhaps by this year's assembly we will welcome our mission effort in Northfield as the newest congregation in our synod.

We said "goodbye" to Pastor Audree Catalano last fall. Pastor Catalano had served on the synod staff for the past five years. We thank God for the service she offered in our midst during that time, and we pray God's blessings on her new call to parish ministry in Chicago. Her departure meant a challenge in covering her areas of responsibilities, primarily call process and candidacy.



In working with the call process among our congregations, we piloted a new strategy involving “synod call shepherds.” These are pastors from our synod who have accepted an invitation to work with the call process in their respective conferences. They visit with the call committees, offer weekly support for the call chair by phone, and assist with a variety of concerns that arise. They have done an excellent job and have been well received. Their reception has caused us to consider whether it may be something that would be continued even after a replacement is found for Pastor Catalano. We are grateful to those who have served as “shepherds:” Blue Earth Conference, Pastor Christina Wendland; Cannon River Conference, Pastor Chris Brekke; Minnesota River Conference, Pastor Charles Espe; Root River Conference, Pastor James Radatz; Zumbro River Conference, Pastor Gary Benson.

The Committee on Candidacy works with those discerning a call to professional leadership in the church, and offers ongoing support during their schooling. Dr. Noel Peterson has been the able chair of this group. Ms. Miri Mattson had previously served on that committee and with Pastor Catalano leaving, was willing to assist by meeting with potential candidates as they discern God’s call to ministry. I am so appreciative of all the hard work that this entire committee offers, and it is showing as the number of our candidates increases.

I am blessed to work with an outstanding staff, all of whom have chipped in while we have been short staffed. Kathy Bolin, Cheryse Brenno-Sloan, Katie Butler, Beth Gabriel, Carolyn Goulet, Larry Iverson, and Deborah Ann Norrie have wonderful gifts that they willingly offer to this synod and a work

ethic that is admirable. And Ms. Shirley Gangstad, the vice president of the synod, leads a synod council that also works with diligence and prayer. Ministry is even fun when shared with such people.

As I shared before, it is all about thanksgiving... Christian life...Christian ministry. It is a privilege to serve the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thank you.

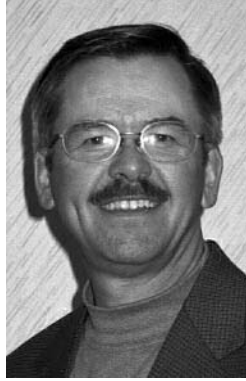
Shalom,

Harold Usgaard
Bishop



Larry Iverson Synod Minister

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:9-13



“A Synod Sharing Our Faith Stories” is our 2007 focus. The bishop modeled this by telling his faith story at the Theological Conference where our rostered staff was gathered. Our Congregational Renewal Team has been including articles in *River Crossings* each month and the weekly E-News has been including bite-sized ideas. Many congregations have found interesting ways for congregation members to share their faith stories.

Natural Church Development continues in seven congregations. The congregations recognize the value of focusing on one particular area of ministry for a year with the intent of improving the overall health of their congregation. We will be expanding this process to train more coaches and expand the congregations in this process.

Hunger 101 experiential workshops were conducted in all five of our conferences and in the 10 conferences of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, who was in this cooperative project in 2006-07 due to an ELCA hunger grant. We will attempt to expand this work in the coming

year to allow congregations to experience this workshop format and raise awareness and action to alleviate and work toward ending hunger in our state, country and world. We also continue to work with other synods in a “Minnesota Without Poverty” initiative with the other 5 synods in Minnesota.

The need for stewardship education and growth within our synod continues, and I am always pleased to work with congregations to identify resources and awareness of our blessings and the wonderful opportunities we have to share our gifts. The latest resource available now from Augsburg Fortress is the appeal method “Stories to Tell and Gifts to Share.” This new resource focuses on telling stories about your faith and on the stewardship themes of grace, gratitude, duty and cheerful giving. It is a wonderful way for congregations to engage in discussion of stewardship intergenerationally and provides good resources to foster education and communication about stewardship. It also fits well with our theme for this year of “A Synod Sharing Our Faith Stories.”

It is a great privilege to serve alongside the people of our congregations, both lay and rostered, to do the great work God has called us to do in spreading the grace, love and hope that is in Christ Jesus to all we encounter. May we all live these words of Paul to the Romans and to all of us who bear Christ’s name.

Your servant in Christ,
Larry Iverson

