

Feature, Strategic Plan Update

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and are tapping into the service. Rick Klau of FeedBurner, Inc., at the 2006 ELCA Communicators’ Conference in Chicago, was so bold to say, “If you’re not on MySpace, you’re not online.” Though perhaps a bit of an exaggeration, he made the point that if you aren’t where people are looking, they won’t find you. Young people in particular are on MySpace and they may be looking for something that a congregation can provide.

Instant messaging (IM) is a little more self-explanatory than some of the other new technologies. IM sends typed messages instantaneous, similar to email but shorter and faster. It is primarily done while the parties are all online at the same time, so it is more conversational. IM, like MySpace, is dominated by younger crowds. Where it has most frequently found its way into church life is youth directors communicating with the youth members. As one of the most easily understood technologies of all, it has endless possibilities within the church. For example, it is generally understood that people feel less self-conscious talking online than they do in person or on the phone. Might pastors be able to engage in more conversations if members were able to get started in a venue where they felt a little more free?

The biggest similarity that both MySpace and IM have is that they have been hot topics among people concerned about the safety of kids sharing personal information online. Some organizations may hesitate to jump on the bandwagon for either of these technologies because parents are working hard to get their kids off of them. One option to combat this safety issue is to have a presence on these forums, giving the kids a positive place to go on the internet, and then also using some of the many good resources available to teach kids. (The July/August issue of *Seeds for the Parish*, page 6, has some excellent resources. The issue is available online at www.elca.org/seeds.)

The internet has brought a plethora of great resources into the homes and offices of many. It has also given way to all of these new technologies with infinite possibilities for aiding in our ministry. There are also problems with technology – both in understanding it as well as issues like safety. If you would like to learn more about how your congregation can use a new technology, go to www.semnsynod.org/communicators.html or contact Katie Butler at the synod office (butler@semnsynod.org, 507-280-9457, or 800-426-6376 (MN only)) and she would be happy to help.

Youth Servant Leader Institute

Vision: Called into God’s Marvelous Light: To Be Strong Leaders

Objective: Youth/young adult event for discerning ministry

By Dayna Clemment
Youth Servant Leader Institute,
Program Coordinator



The first group of the Youth Servant Leader Institute (YSLI) participants completed their first week of leadership camp at Good Earth Village August 6-10. Eight high school students from Southeastern Minnesota participated in community building, worship and game leading, leadership development and servant leadership. The group worked three to four hours a day to build walls, which were trucked to Albert Lea, for a Habitat for Humanity home.

Good Earth Village, in partnership with the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, Rochester area and Freeborn/Mower County Habitat for Humanity Chapters, Holden Village in Chelan, WA, and Lutheran Volunteer Corps, received a \$125,000 grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to develop the Good Earth Village Youth Servant Leader Institute (YSLI).

The objectives of YSLI are to train young people in principles of servant leadership and for them to return to



Participants learn to depend on each other through trust falls.

their congregations and communities as youth leaders. They will develop a support team of youth and adults, discern what the needs are in their congregation and community, and develop a service ministry to meet those needs. Ideas of those ministries include (brainstormed by youth at YSLI in August): leading youth events in the absence of a youth director, developing a group of youth to provide music in worship, work with developed community organizations to do

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fundraising for people in the community who live on the edge financially, etc.

YSLI participants gather for one week of leadership camp during the summer and have four retreats throughout the year. If you have questions about YSLI or have a youth that might be interested please contact Dayna Clemment, YSLI Program Coordinator, dcllement@juno.com or 608-780-6891. Or contact Good Earth Village.



High schoolers built walls for Habitat for Humanity during their week at Good Earth Village.

The following youth were at YSLI in August:
Gabe Benedict, Our Savior's Lutheran, Austin
Sara Crissinger, Christ Lutheran, Faribault
Emily Howe, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Rochester
Halla Nelson, Our Savior's Lutheran, Austin
Leah Oie, Faith Lutheran, Wabasha
Dean Safe, Spring Valley Lutheran, Cannon Falls
Maeson Stanke, St. John's Lutheran, Northfield
Peter Tinaglia, Christ Lutheran, Faribault

Thank you to the following people for their leadership through the YSLI Advisory Team:

Gretchen Bachman, Good Earth Village
Nick Fisher-Broin, Spring Garden Lutheran, Cannon Falls
Dayna Clemment, YSLI Program Coordinator, Northfield
Dave Herder, Good Earth Village
Denae Juntunen, Grace Lutheran, Albert Lea
Brad Kmoch, Holden Village Partnership Builder, lives in Northfield
Nicole Pokorney, Gloria Dei Lutheran, Rochester
Meg Sander, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Wells
(And a big thanks to Steve Atwood at Good Earth Village for leading us in the wall building project and for Gary Irmiter, Thrivent Builds Regional Specialist for helping us out!)

2006: A Synod Joined in Bible Study

Congregational Bible Study

By Pastor Cindy Fisher-Broin
Congregational Renewal Team

Sometimes it is difficult to find the right time for Bible study. Those of us who plan Bible study wonder how to get more people involved. It seems that so few people come to class, when it could benefit the whole congregation.

Word Weekends worked for our congregation. Once a month for two years we transformed worship into a time of Bible Study. During those two years we did an overview of the entire Bible, studying certain groups of books at a time.

During Word Weekends, worship consisted of an abbreviated time of worship, with the focus being on about forty minutes of Bible study. In preparation for the services each month we developed an 8 ½ x 14 inch handout that had drawings on one side and a written explanation of the Bible study on the other. The drawings helped people visualize the part of the Bible being studied and encouraged children to become interested. The written explanations were something people could take home and study later.

We spent a lot of time preparing Word Weekends but it was time well spent. As pastors and leaders of the study, my husband Nick and I were involved in intensive study in preparation for the weekends and spent much time developing the handouts. We found, however, that it benefited not only the congregation but it was very valuable for our own biblical study as well.

In our congregations, we may wonder how to find time for Bible study and how to get more people involved in it. Don't overlook worship as a time that can encourage participation by more people.

If you would like more information about Word Weekends or would like to see what we did, please contact Cindy or Nick Fisher-Broin at 651-258-4310 or fisherbr@sleepyeyetel.net.



Called into God's Marvelous Light

**To Be Joyful Witnesses
To Be Christ-Centered Disciples
To Be Strong Leaders**