



River Crossings

A Newsletter of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Volume 22

February 2010

Number 2

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Selected Resources for ELCA Stories to Share

Stories of Faith in Action

Stories of God changing lives through ministry
www.ELCA.org/stories

Seeds for the Parish

Resources paper for congregational leaders
www.ELCA.org/seeds

World Hunger Stories

World Hunger stories from around the world
www.ELCA.org/hunger/stories

Hand in Hand

Global Mission quarterly newsletter
tinyurl.com/GMHandInHand

Remember in Prayer

Health Concerns

- Rev. Sherman Coltveldt
- Rev. Donald Deines
- Rev. Loren Halvorson
- Rev. John Henriksen
- Rev. Ronald Jensen
- Rev. Tim McDermott
- Shannon Reuss, wife of Rev. Peter Reuss
- Rev. Don Roberts
- Fern Steffen, wife of Rev. Richard Steffen

Sympathies

- The family of Rev. Rolf Aaseng, who passed away January 7, 2010

Councils as Leaders

Bishop Usgaard, the synod staff, and the Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team of the Synod Council invite new and returning church councils and rostered leaders to come together for learning and fellowship.

This year's event features Dr. Mark Allan Powell, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, on "Resources for Mission."

A printable flyer and online registration are available at www.semnsynod.org/CAL.html or fill out the form at the bottom of this page and mail to the synod office.

For more information, contact Cheryse Brenno-Sloan at the synod office - sloan@semnsynod.org, 507-280-9457 or 800-426-6376 in Minnesota.

Have Board of Pensions Insurance? Don't Delay!

If 65% of ELCA Board of Pensions primary care health insurance plan members (this includes rostered and lay and spouses) take the simple online health assessment by April 30, the congregations in our synod will collectively save \$51,381. The Wellness Dollars earned by 65% completion, if everyone also earns their maximum, is \$92,250. Saving money for mission, saving personal money on medical expenses - what's stopping you!

This year the number MUST be reached by April 30 or there is no 2% discount throughout the synod. Don't rely on your neighbor, visit www.elcaforwellness.org today!

These assessments are for plan members only and do not include those on Medicare or dependants (children) of plan members. The assessment asks for a variety of medical numbers. If you don't know your numbers, call your doctor. If you don't have current numbers, use old numbers or skip those questions if necessary. Individual medical information will not be used or shared by Blue Cross Blue Shield, ELCA Board of Pensions, or Mayo Clinic.



Get it Online

- Take your assessment at www.elcaforwellness.org
- Learn more about the changes at www.elcabop.org (search for "health assessment" at the top right)

Councils as Leaders in the Church Registration

Registration deadline is Wednesday, March 17, 2010. Online registration at www.semnsynod.org/CAL.html

Please fill in names for all persons attending. One form per congregation.

Congregation Name/City: _____

Pastor(s): _____

Council Members: _____

E-mail Contact (one per form): _____

Daytime Phone Contact (one per form): _____



Presiding Bishop Details ELCA Response to Haiti Earthquake

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is responding to the earthquake in Haiti through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), wrote the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, ELCA presiding bishop, in a Jan. 13 letter to members. Hanson, who is also president of the LWF, noted that the ELCA has committed substantial funds to support relief efforts, and encouraged members to share information and provide financial gifts.

Hanson told the ELCA News Service that "this is a time for the ELCA to come together as we have so often done in our history." He said the church has the capacity to respond to human tragedy, and "members are called to bear witness to our faith by responding generously and working with partners" to provide relief.

The presiding bishop asked members to contribute financial gifts to the church's relief efforts. Members can provide gifts online at www.ELCA.org/haitiearthquake or call 800-638-3522.

ELCA Seminary Student May Have Perished in Haiti Earthquake

It is believed that Benjamin Judd Larson, a student at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, died from the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.

Ben Larson's wife, Renee Splichal Larson, and his cousin, Jonathan Larson*, were in the same building as Ben at the time of the earthquake. Renee and Jonathan made it out safely but were unable to rescue Ben.

Ben, Renee and Jonathan are fourth-year Wartburg seminarians certified for ordination. They traveled together to Haiti to help with the new Haiti Lutheran Church. Ben was teaching at the Pastors and Lay Leaders Theological Conference in Haiti.

"Ben was so excited to become a pastor," said April Larson in a Jan. 14 statement from First Lutheran Church's executive committee. "Ben loved Christ, and he loved people," she said.

Ben's mother, the Rev. April Ulring Larson, is pastor at First Lutheran Church, Duluth, Minn., and former bishop of the ELCA La Crosse Area Synod. His father, the Rev. Judd W. Larson, is a retired ELCA pastor.

* Jonathan Larson is a member of United Lutheran Church, Red Wing, Minn.



Lutheran Bishops Offer Ideas to White House to Stir Economy

In a Dec. 16 letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, a caucus of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) bishops acknowledged economic challenges and suggested opportunities for job creation. The group met with Martha Coven, special assistant to the president for mobility and opportunity policy, to present the letter and discuss the status of hunger and economic insecurity in the United States.

In the letter the bishops wrote, "We see firsthand the effects that unemployment has on individuals, families and communities. While we are there to counsel and comfort, we are also committed to encouraging policies that can spur job growth."

The bishops' letter outlined a number of propositions for job creation such as small business development, job retraining, green jobs for low-income people and expanding public service programs.

The caucus asked for particular consideration of sustainable development for low-income communities, as well as sustaining the environment and people living in poverty through investments in green jobs and clean energy technology.

The Rev. Jessica R. Crist, bishop of the ELCA Montana Synod and caucus participant said, "We represent mainstream America; we speak for justice; we speak for the poor. To be together with others in this task is very helpful to the bishops."

During their time here, the bishops received legislative updates from the ELCA Washington Office and others on health care reform, job creation and child nutrition reauthorization, and attended a "United We Stand: Feed a Neighbor" event hosted by the ELCA Washington Office.

Other participating bishops were the Rev. Michael L. Burk, Southeastern Iowa Synod; the Rev. Robert L. Driesen, Upper Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Northeastern Ohio Synod; the Rev. Marcus C. Lohrmann, Northwestern Ohio Synod; the Rev. James F. Mauney, Virginia Synod, and the Rev. David B. Zellmer, South Dakota Synod.

Get it Online

- The bishops' letter is at <http://bit.ly/5Tlwx3>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Assembly Vocabulary No Accident!

From www.ELCA.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Churchwide-Assembly/About/Preparation-Information/Role-of-the-Churchwide-Assembly.aspx

It is important to note and remember that no delegates will be present for the assembly. Voting members are not delegates, as that term is understood or used in some political contexts. The voting members, elected by Synod Assemblies to serve in the Churchwide Assembly, come together as representatives not only of their own congregations and synods but also serve on behalf of all the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- The terminology related to the legislative process of this church is no accident.
- The words, "Synod Assembly" and "Churchwide Assembly," rather than convention, and "voting members," rather than delegates, were deliberately chosen for our governing documents.

These words not only fulfill certain legal requirements but also reflect an ecclesial (that is, churchly) understanding—an understanding grounded in Scripture, reflected in the Lutheran Confessional writings, and established as part of this church's polity upon the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Within the ELCA, we find three primary expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. They exist and serve within this one church.

- A congregation of the ELCA does not meet in convention; the members gather in worship, carry out service, and assemble occasionally and properly for governance decisions and elections.
- The people of this church in each of the 65 synods are not sent as agents of a particular caucus; they are not gathered to act as politicized delegates to a regional party convention. Rather, they assemble as

duly selected members of this church with voting responsibilities for governance and elections on behalf of the synod. The Synod Assembly is just that, an assembly of the people of this church, some of whom have been chosen for the responsibility of being voting members of the Synod Assembly. They assemble together in worship and are nurtured in the faith through Word and Sacrament. Then, in their deliberations, they seek the wisdom and guidance of God's Spirit in the decisions and elections of the assembly.

- The people of this church, when gathered as voting members of the Synod Assembly, have the responsibility of electing the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly. Persons so chosen are given the responsibility of doing the work of the Churchwide Assembly on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They are not sent to participate as politicized delegates from a regional or agenda-specific caucus at some national party convention. Rather, they assemble as members of this church.

In the ELCA's predecessor church bodies, the word "delegate" was used and meant people chosen to fulfill responsibilities in what then were known as synod or district "conventions." Like those "delegates" in our predecessor churches, ELCA voting members in ELCA synodical assemblies are chosen to represent all of the members of all of the congregations in the synod.

In the case of the Churchwide Assembly, voting members carry out their duties on behalf of all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Nourished by Word and Sacrament, they are called in assembly to seek the well-being of this whole church.

Voting members carry a heavy responsibility. They must study carefully the issues on the agenda of the assembly, listen thoughtfully to the debate throughout plenary sessions, examine wisely possible amendments to proposals, consider with insight resolutions or new business submitted by voting members, elect with care apt persons to serve on the churchwide council, boards, and committees, seek prayerfully the guidance of God's Spirit in all matters, and act conscientiously for the sake of the unity and well-being of this church and the whole Church.



Lent: Making a Space for Grace

By Inez Torres Davis, Director for Justice, Women of the ELCA

From *Café* (March 2009), an online publication by the Women of the ELCA, www.boldcafe.org

Jesus spent 40 days in prayerful self examination and fasting in the wilderness. Lent, the church's season of penitence and baptismal renewal, is the 40-day span from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Christians observe Lent by prayer, fasting, and service. It is a quiet season of looking inward and preparing for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection at Easter.

Some commit to observing a meaningful Lenten season by giving up something, such as lattes or chocolate. Others take on a spiritual discipline, such as volunteering with a non-profit organization or adding Bible reading to their daily schedules.

Consider spending these 40 days with prayer in a sacred space. You can create your own sacred space—whether it is in a corner of your apartment, a rug in your dorm room, or not even a room at all. For 40 days, make a place in your life for the Spirit to blow in.

The time and the place

When we take time away from our busy daily schedules, we begin to strengthen our spiritual lives. We, [women especially,] may have been taught to put ourselves and our needs last. For the 40 days of Lent, however, let's give ourselves the time and space to ponder: How are things between God and me?

Lent is a time for sending fewer instant messages and adding more prayer. Lent calls for taking fewer hours to explore YouTube and more hours to explore the possibilities of God's call and our baptism. Lent is our time to be more God-aware.

This season reminds us that we all have a need to be deeply touched by God's Spirit. The idea of shaping a personal space to nurture our spirits and our relationship with God doesn't sound so farfetched during Lent. It is a good time to start something new, personal, and sacred.

Beyond the sanctuary

Many Lutheran traditions tend to emphasize spiritual growth in communal disciplines, such as participating in worship and taking part in Bible studies. While these are essential, they don't encompass every aspect of our spiritual lives. A personal sacred space for prayer and meditation provides a place for spiritual self-care that enriches and supports the good habits of regular worship and study within a faith community.

What is sacred space?

Sacred space can mean many things. It is a place where we make room for the sacred. It may mean different things at different stages of our lives. This space is one way we respond to the Spirit of Life, to Christ within us, to a Spirit that seeks fuller expression in all the areas of our lives. A labyrinth is one example of sacred space. A garden is another. And a meditation room is yet another.



At home

I asked women in their 20s and 30s where, when, and how they recognize sacred space in their lives. Several had a one-word answer—home. Their homes are the sacred spaces they create for themselves.

They experience home as sanctuary with everything in order, a place providing calm and healing. One young woman shared her need for order as part of home as sacred space. When her husband cleans up, he asks her where things belong, because he values her need for sanctuary.

Nature is another place where many find their sacred spaces. One woman spoke of oceans. Another shared how the sounds and smells of Lake Michigan's waves, the birds in flight, the wind on her skin, and the sand under her feet carry her to a healing and sacred space. Another said that a garden called her to mindful presence.

The senses of touch and smell were also mentioned. One young mother said that the tender skin of her infant daughter's neck was sacred and healing space. Another woman found the scent of burning sage to be elixir. The elements of water, fire, and air were also mentioned. One woman found that hot showers drive her into deep prayer. Another lights a candle before prayer.

Creating a space

When we are in sacred space, we touch or are touched by God's presence. This space has no specific blueprint. However, small things can enhance our awareness of God's energy in our life. The use of candles, herbs, symbols, prayers, and visualization can contribute to healing. A home altar consisting of two candles, a folded prayer shawl, a Bible, a sage bundle,

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Continued from page 5

and a favorite chant or liturgy assists one young woman with her meditation practice. She closes her meditation with the Lord's Prayer.

This same young woman, a woman of color, imagines a winged-brown woman carrying the energy from her head to her limbs. This visualization, she said, helps her to feel energy throughout her body.

Another young mother gets up half an hour before her family for quiet and private spiritual practice on a rug. She said that on the days she takes the extra time, things go more smoothly — not because things are different, but because she has a more centered perspective.

The mindful meditation using breath, walking, and sound can be enjoyed in sacred spaces. This kind of meditation consists of the gentle holding and releasing of the mind and its thoughts, and a mindful focus on one's breath, steps, or on the silence between the sounds of nature or music. You may fall asleep during breath and sound meditation but most often, you will enter a healing stillness.

Prayer breathing

In Scripture-breath prayers, you speak the chosen Scripture softly and breathily during both the inhalation and the exhalation of breath. To do this, read a favorite Bible verse aloud to sense where your inhalation (starting at the beginning of the text) ends, and where your exhalation (starting with the next phrase or part of the text) comfortably begins and ends.

Practice speaking the first part as you inhale and the last part as you exhale. Longer verses require more than one complete breath. Practice until you can breathe and speak the verse smoothly and without strain. Once you are comfortable with where your inhalation ends, mark that place in the text. You have created a Scripture-breath prayer. When challenges come, breathing such personal Scripture-prayers can be powerfully freeing and calming.

Things we see, touch, or hear as lovely or appealing can be used to create our personal sacred spaces. Read more about how to create your sacred space in the upcoming Women of the ELCA resource, Sacred Spaces.



Get it Online

- Read the full story - www.boldcafe.org/0607/hottopic.html
- More from Café - www.boldcafe.org

2010 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly

“God's Work. Our Hands. Congregations Alive in Communities”



May 7-8, 2010
Mayo Civic Center - Rochester, MN

How Many Voting Members?

Voting members at the Synod Assembly include all clergy and AIMs under call on the roster of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod and two or more lay members of each congregation. Additional voting members (over two) is based on membership from 2008. The formula and exact numbers for each congregation are available at www.semnsynod.org/assembly.html.

Guide to the Assembly

Synod Assembly Brochures are available online to be printed and used as an overview of the basic information on the 2010 Synod Assembly for elected or potential voting members. To download the PDF for printing, visit www.semnsynod.org/assembly.html These were also mailed to congregations at the end of December.

Youth Rebates

In response to a resolution to encourage congregations to bring young people as voting members to the Assembly, the Synod Council Executive Committee is offering registration rebates for high school age voting members.

A \$25 rebate is available if a congregation brings one high school student as a voter. If a congregation sends two high school voters, the congregation will receive a rebate of 50% of the total registration for two people.

The rebates will be paid to congregations after the Assembly when attendance is confirmed by the registrar.

Living Liturgy Event

By Sonya Zieske

November 19-21, 2009, Trinity Lutheran Church, Albert Lea hosted a Living Liturgy event. The gifts received, visions shared, and praises offered, are an offering that will continue to inspire all who attended.

The weekend provided an opportunity for nearly 100 worship leaders to experience, study and reflect on ways to help their communities pray with power, integrity and meaning. Attendees came from the Southeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, Minneapolis, and St. Paul synods, as well local Catholic churches. During the concert/songfest on Friday evening, around 200 voices joined in singing, praying and praising!

Living Liturgy, an event endorsed by the ELCA, was presented by a team of musicians, clergy and worship leaders. The five leaders - Rev. Susan Briehl, Rev. Ben Stewart, Marty Haugen, Mary Preus, and Tom Witt - brought a wealth of experience from years of planning and leading worship, teaching, and leading workshops for clergy, parish musicians, and other worship leaders. The presenters are familiar in the Lutheran community as composers of liturgy and congregational song and as theologians.

The two and a half-day event presented an opportunity for Lutheran worship leaders to experience, study and reflect on ways to help their communities worship and pray with power, integrity and meaning. The workshop offered meaningful and easily implemented techniques for all ministries, as well as theological, scriptural, and liturgical support for worship planning and renewal. A variety of interests were addressed: baptismal ministry, reading scripture aloud, congregational music from a variety of styles and cultures, worship space and symbols, parish music committee, seasons of the liturgical year, choosing liturgies from among the bounty of resources available.

The Trinity congregation would like to thank the participants, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod and Thrivent for their support. May all who attended continue to be inspired to explore ways to enrich worship in their local churches and may Christ be lifted up in new and engaging ways to our world!



Get it Online

- More on Living Liturgy - www.livingliturgy.com

The Gift of Marriage

A moment of personal privilege in these days of hearts and valentines in our culture; a word concerning "marriage."

Evangelical Lutheran Worship states, "marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family." This statement is re-enforced by the recent social statement on sexuality that has garnered so much attention. Marriage is a gift from God!

Lynette and I recently celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. We were able to plan a few days away. It was wonderful. I have lived with my wife longer than I have lived without her. I really can't remember...nor conceive...of life without her. She fills my life with joy. Every day is a new adventure. She offers me what I need... a hug...encouragement...a word of forgiveness. In this calling as bishop, she has been with me every bit of the way. She is truly a blessing from God.

I have friends who also serve in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, but in their denominations they are not able to enjoy such relationships. They speak of the challenges of evenings alone and the "seductive companions" that become so attractive in times of stress and anxiety. Thank God Martin Luther recognized such dangers...and the importance of loving relationships even for clergy.

We have heard much, these days, that recent ELCA actions have devalued the institution of marriage. I disagree with that interpretation. The ELCA continues to support and recognize the place of marriage in our human family. I do not believe our decisions about same sex relationships have in any way detracted from the institution of marriage. Indeed, who of us who have been so blessed by marriage would not wish everyone to be able to experience such love and commitment?

Shalom,

Harold Usgaard, Bishop



Marks of a Missional Congregation: Word

By Rev. Linda Gunderson, Synod Minister

This is the second installment of a series based on marks of a missional congregation from Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, ELCA.



The second mark is the Word. A congregation centered in the mission of Jesus Christ is a community of the Bible, the Word. This may seem obvious and I guess it is; however, it is worth saying. The Word of God read, interpreted, sung, prayed, recited, preached, taught, studied, learned, laughed and cried over, challenging us, comforting us, leading us, centers who and what we are. From the toddler Bible given by the congregation's Women of the ELCA at a child's baptism to a well-marked scripture passage read from a grandparent's

Throughout this series, the central mark of a missional congregation remains constant:

Resurrection: A missional congregation lives in the power of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In the Risen Christ all things are possible.

Bible at that beloved one's funeral, the Word offers the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

I wonder if we get stuck thinking that the Word of God, the Bible, is for advanced readers only. In other words, you need to somehow know it before you can study it or read it, especially in a group. Instead the Word of God is a living word making amateurs of us all. It

comes to life in community where we discover together the power of God's love contained in the Word. It comes to life as we share our stories of faith and see in the Word of God the story of our salvation. There are no experts except the Holy Spirit. Historians, translators, professors and the like may be seen as experts on the Bible, however, the living Word in our lives changes, challenges, renews and makes even experts amateurs. We all find ourselves trusting in God's Spirit to lead us to hear, read and see what the Word is saying to us at any moment. We all find ourselves seeking the assurance of God's love through Jesus Christ in the words of the Bible. We all find ourselves hoping for God's word of grace to be spoken to us by the community of faith. In the Word we find the assurance of God's abundant grace and love.

We are blessed as congregations of the ELCA to have the Bible Book of Faith Initiative. This initiative seeks to help us learn the Bible and speak our faith with confidence. Many congregations are engaged in this exciting initiative. If your congregation has yet to participate you can check it out at bookoffaith.org. Individuals are also welcome to join the conversation.

So, open the Bible, tell your faith story – how the Word of God is alive in your life? Talk to one another about what you hear and read. Ask questions. Look for joy in God's Word. Laugh together over this living Word. Pray for the Spirit to lead you. Enjoy.

Peace,

Pr. Linda

Share Your News

Do you have something to share? Congregations can submit the following for publication on the synod website:

- **Events** - anything happening that you'd like to invite others to attend (these may also be posted on this page of *River Crossings*!)
- **Job openings** - any non-pastoral position can be posted free of charge
- **News** - share information about exciting things that have happened or will be happening in your congregation.

Send information to Katie Livingood at livingood@semnsynod.org or call her at the synod office at 507-280-9457 or 800-426-6376 in Minnesota.

The Call to Love Our Enemies

Greetings!

There was a song in the '60's: "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" If that were written today, it might be "Where Have Civility and Politeness Gone?"

Our politicians, both state and national seem bound to partisan politics with no thought of consensus or compromise or getting things done. Town hall meetings around the country, called to allow citizens to have a voice in where this country should be going and how we should be governed, dissolve into shouting matches and near riots. Local government meetings—city councils and school boards—regularly become a place for cantankerous and argumentative people to vent. We even hear of congregational and church council meetings that turn into shouting matches.

Jesus intended to turn the world upside down, to show that the things valued in the world had no value in his kingdom and the things valued in his kingdom were so difficult to obtain in this world. No wonder one of Jesus' recurring themes was "Love your enemies." What an amazing, controversial, countercultural idea! Then he makes it even more specific and challenging by saying, "Love your neighbors as yourself." My goodness—what was the man thinking? And if that was not already radical enough, when asked "Who is my neighbor?" he makes it very clear that everyone is our neighbor!

When we were first going to war with Iraq, I recall hearing lots of prayers about loving our enemies, hoping for peace to come quickly and end the destructiveness of war. I rarely hear prayers these days that call for the Holy Spirit to stir our hearts to "love our enemies," to "do good to those who hate us." I seem rarely to hear prayers asking for help in loving our neighbors.

I love the song, "They Will Know We Are Christians by our Love," but it seems to me these days, that the song poses an even greater challenge to us. Since "love is all we need," please God send us your love and help us to love!

Blessings in Christ,

Shirley



Shirley Gangstad
Synod Vice President

Reading the Book of Faith Together

By Sharon Barnes
Synod Book of Faith Task Force

There were about 50 of us sitting in the circle that night. The question posed to the participants of the forum was "do you read the Bible?" and then, "Why do you read or why do you not read?" Everyone in the circle freely shared. While I did not keep count, I think there were more no's than yes's. Some of the reasons:



- They had gone to Sunday school as a child, and heard the stories but did not make the connections.
- They started reading where we start most books – at the beginning – but then got to the begets, or they got to Leviticus, and just quit.
- We've all heard the reasons and we've probably said them.

I've been a Bible-reader for a long time and haven't always understood it. During this past year, I've had opportunity to take part in some Book of Faith studies and have learned some new tools to help me in my reading. One of those tools is the importance of studying and reading in community. In *Opening the Book of Faith*, Mark Allan Powell says "Lutherans say that the interpretation of Scripture is a public act rather than a private one. Through the Bible, God speaks to Israel and to the church. God does not speak directly or privately to individuals. What God says to Israel and to the church may have specific application for individual lives, but the meaning of Scripture for individuals is to be in harmony with its universal meaning for the community of faith."

We can help each other in understanding Scripture. If you have not yet opened the Book of Faith or are not having a Bible study in your congregation, I urge you to get started. We all want to become more fluent in our first language of faith.

Call Update, Calendar of Events

Call Update:

Self Study:

- Albert Lea, Salem – solo (Rolf Wangberg, interim)
- Austin, Red Oak Grove – solo (Gene Leiter, interim)
- Chatfield, Chatfield – solo (David Beckstrom, interim)
- Kenyon, Dale & Holden – solo (2-point) (Rell Spickerman, interim)
- Kenyon, Gol – part-time, solo (Marvin Kormann, interim)
- Kenyon, Hegre – part-time solo (Dick Hegal, interim)
- LeRoy, LeRoy – solo (Elaine Seimsen, interim)
- New Richland/Otisco, St. Peter's & St. Peter's – solo (2-point) (Gerry Giese, interim)
- Ostrander, Trinity – solo (Linda Helberg, interim)
- Red Wing, First – Senior (David Jore, interim)
- Wanamingo, Trinity & Wanamingo – solo (2-point) (Clark Cary, interim)
- Welch, Vasa – solo (Del Sailor, interim)
- Whalan, First of Highland & Whalan – solo (Roger Knutson, interim)

Interviewing:

- Byron, Christ – associate
- Hayward, Hayward/Trondhjem – solo (2-point) (Dick Spande, interim)
- Kasson, St. John's – senior (Harold Mueller, interim)
- Mankato, Grace – solo (Orlin Mandsager, interim)
- Mapleton, St. John's – solo (Bob Kleinke, Interim)
- Rochester, People of Hope – solo

Ready to Extend Call:

- Wabasha, Faith – solo (Evelyn Dahlke, interim)

Call Accepted:

- Leslie Neist, Luther Seminary graduate to solo (2-point) at Little Cedar & Marshall, Adams, 1/11/10
- Shelley Cunningham, St. Paul Area Synod to associate at Zumbro, Rochester, 2/1/10
- Betsy Dartt, Indiana-Kentucky Synod to solo at Greenfield, Harmony, 2/21/10

Ordination:

- Leslie Neist, Luther Seminary, 12/12/09

Roster Updates:

On Leave from Call:

- Jane Ann Timmerman, interim at Little Cedar & Marshall, Adams, 1/1/10

Retired:

- M. Eugene Leiter, interim at Red Oak Grove, Austin, 2/1/10

Upcoming Events

Feb. 2-3, 2010 (Tues.-Wed.): **ELCA Transition Seminar**
The Duncan Center, Delray Beach, FL
www.ELCA.org/leadership/events

Feb. 4, 2010 (Thur.): **Congregational Report Assistance**
1:00 p.m.
Synod Office, Assisi Heights, Rochester, MN
www.semnsynod.org/events/additional.html,
sloan@semnsynod.org, 507-280-9457, or
800-426-6376 in Minnesota

Feb. 4-7, 2010 (Thur.-Sun.): **ELCA Head of Staff Seminar**
The Duncan Center, Delray Beach, FL
www.ELCA.org/leadership/events

Feb. 5-7, 2010 (Fri.-Sun.): **Quilt Retreat**
Additional Dates: March 2-3, March 5-7
Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN
www.GoodEarthVillage.org, 507-346-2494, or
Jenni@GoodEarthVillage.org

Feb. 11-12, 2010 (Thur.-Fri.): **Synod Communicators' Retreat**
Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN
www.semnsynod.org/communicators/retreat.html

Feb. 14, 2010 (Sun.): **Conference Assemblies**
Various locations, for details see
www.semnsynod.org/events.html

*Information about these events will be listed on
www.semnsynod.org/events.html as available.*



PRAYER NETWORKS

By Robin McCullough-Bade

Prayer is not just for pastors. All of God's people are invited to pray on the behalf of others. Here are some ways to include your congregation in prayer:

Extending Sunday Prayers Throughout the Week

Encourage worshippers to continue to pray throughout the week for those who have been included in prayer at worship. Take this extension of prayer beyond Sunday morning very seriously. Do not let Sunday morning be the only time the congregation remembers prayer requests. Frequently, extend an invitation to the congregation to be intentional about remembering in their personal, daily prayers the prayer requests listed in the bulletin. (Assuming prayer requests are printed in the bulletin - a good idea!) People might want to get in the habit of putting the prayer requests (listed in the worship bulletin) in a place where they can be easily reviewed during the week for prayer. Add any requests announced during worship.

A simple written invitation in your weekly bulletin might include, "Please pray this week for the following..." Here are some possibilities for weekly prayer requests:

- Those celebrating birthdays this week.
- Those celebrating anniversaries.
- Those facing illness, loss or other needs.
- Those God might be stirring to come and worship with your congregation next Sunday.
- The pastor, staff and leaders of the congregation.

Prayer Chains

E-mail is a simple way to notify people about prayer requests; one button and many are notified.

Some will choose to be notified by phone. Arrange the phone tree so persons are calling friends or those whom they regularly greet. (Hopefully they

would be more aware of good times to call, vacation schedules, etc.) One suggestion is to have no one contact more than three or four persons. Make it as simple as possible.

Random Prayer Groups

Encourage the congregation to pray for each other by randomly placing three names in an envelope. Invite each person in the congregation to select an envelope. During a designated stretch of time (Advent, Lent, summer, 6 weeks), pray for those names in your envelope.

Prayer Teams

Organize groups interested in fervently praying in a particular area of interest. Some suggestions on how to organize groups can be found in the full version of this article.

Full article at archive.elca.org/prayer/resources/networks.html

MONTHLY BIBLE VERSE

This Bible verse was selected by Harold Usgaard, bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, for everyone in the synod to study.



"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving."

COLOSSIANS 4:2

ABOUT OUR SYNOD

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 131,000 baptized people in 184 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

The Bridge is a monthly publication of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. For more information, contact the synod office:

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