

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

# NOTES & QUOTES

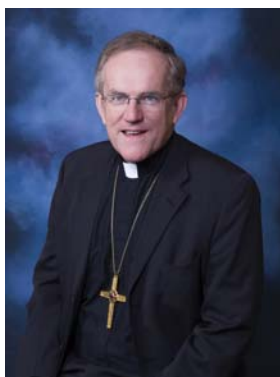
Volume 21, Issue 5

MAY 2008

## SPRING

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

tskrenes@nglsynod.org



**“The little stream sings in the crease of the hill.  
It is the water of life. It knows nothing of death, nothing.  
And this is the morning of Christ’s resurrection.**

**The tomb is empty.**

**There is no death.**

**Death is our illusion, our wish to belong only to our-  
selves,**

**which is our freedom to kill one another.**

**From this sleep may we too rise, as out of the dark grave.”**

**-Wendell Berry “Sabbath Poem 2003”**

I walk. Not everyday and not all that far. Some days, three miles, and some days, four miles. All winter, I have been walking in the house on my basement treadmill. The television is on - and after forty or fifty minutes, I am done for the day.

Now, finally, I am beginning to walk outside again. I usually walk the same roads, past the same homes. It is my regular route. The days are getting long. And I am beginning to see on my walks signs of spring. The grass is beginning to turn green, the snow is just about totally gone. The trees are “budding up” and will soon explode with all their leafy splendor.

There is something about a spring day! The world and life in the Church seems more positive in the spring. Our energy levels are up, and we are ready to charge into all those projects. We know there is work to be done, and we want to get it done.

When I walk, I am reminded that Easter is God’s springtime season. The empty tomb, the good news is that Christ lives and that death is, in the words of Wendell Berry, “our illusion, our wish to belong only to ourselves.”

Come Spring - Come Life!



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THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY****May 18-19****“RENEW”**

*“Three graduating seniors from three of our seminaries have been assigned to our Synod for possible placement as pastors.”*

Over three hundred clergy and lay voting members are registered! The Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly is coming. We begin with worship on Sunday evening, May 18, at Messiah Lutheran Church in Marquette, and continue Monday morning at Northern Michigan University. Sunday evening, we will install Pastor Arthur Weiss as Executive Director of Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp, and we will honor Lay School Mission graduates, and clergy reaching milestone years in their careers.

The Assembly on Monday, May 19, will elect Churchwide Voting Members to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Together we will discuss and act upon resolutions, as well as hear from former Bishop Don McCoid. Pastor McCoid serves as the Head of Ecumenical Affairs for the Churchwide organization, and will represent Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson.

At the Assembly, we will also receive offerings for seminary scholarships, mosquito netting for our Tanzania anti-malaria project and also “quarters for world hunger.” It will be a very busy twenty-hour meeting. Thanking God, we will celebrate life in the Gospel.

More information, as well as a complete agenda for the Assembly, is available on our Synod website. [www.nglsynod.org](http://www.nglsynod.org)

## **OUR SEMINARIES ARE WORKING FOR OUR CONGREGATIONS!**

Our Church owns and supports eight seminaries. Seminaries are graduate schools for the training of pastors. Each year over 300 graduates of these institutions are called into congregations of the Church, including congregations in our Northern Great Lakes Synod. Three graduating seniors from three of our seminaries have been assigned to our Synod for possible placement as pastors. The three graduating this spring are: Jim Wendt from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa; Lloyd Luedemann from Trinity

**THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)**

Seminary in Columbus, Ohio; and Kevin Kaiser from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. My Assistant, Pastor Jennie Johnson Wrege, and I have finished their interviews, and are recommending them for call in three of our congregations currently without pastors.

The congregations will each decide if they wish to interview these candidates. Should the Call Committees or Congregation Councils sense within them a "match" and should the candidates feel "called" to these settings, the process will continue, ending in a Congregational Call meeting, a Call extended and then Ordination into the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament. This is a very exciting time for these seminarians and for congregations in our Synod.

## TRANSITIONS

+Congratulations to **Pastor LaVonne Stephenson**. Pastor Stephenson has been unanimously called to serve Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Newberry, Michigan, as pastor. Pastor Stephenson was previously the pastor at Our Redeemer's from 1989 to 2000, and has been serving since last summer as its Interim pastor. She will be installed as Pastor this spring!

+Congratulations to **Pastor Lee and Pastor Lori Liverance** who were ordained into the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and who were installed as Assistant Pastors at **Our Saviour's in Iron Mountain** on Sunday, April 13, 2008. Both Pastors Lori and Lee have been serving at Our Saviour's as Diaconal Ministers, and have completed formation for ordination. The Church was full, the music was wonderful. It was a magnificent day!

+Congratulations to **Pastor David Echelbarger and Pastor Christine Thomas-Echelbarger (Immanuel, Negaunee)** on their calls to serve Mount Pleasant in Racine, Wisconsin. The Pastor Echelbargers have served in Negaunee for sixteen years. We shall miss them! May God bless their work in this new field of ministry.

+God bless **Pastor John Ahola**, son of this Synod and of Gloria Dei in Hancock, who was ordained into the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament on April 26, 2008 at Gloria Dei. It was my pleasure to ordain him on behalf of the whole Church and of the Northwest Minnesota Synod where he will be serving as a parish pastor. God bless his life of service!

+Congratulations to **Pastor James Duehring** as he was installed on April 6, 2008 as Pastor at **Prince of Peace in Harvey**. Thanks to Interim Pastor Rell Spickerman for his work at Prince of Peace. God bless Pastor Duehring and his wife, Giselle, as they begin their work in our midst.

+Congratulations to **Pastor John Kuziej** who was installed on April 6, 2008 as Pastor at **Pioneer Lake in Conover**. Pastor Kuziej and his wife, Jeannette, move within our Synod from Ewen and Paynesville. Thanks to Interim Pastor Dorothy Lindstrom for her ministry at Pioneer Lake. God is at work in our people as we serve together the Risen Christ.

+Congratulations to **Pastor Mark Bangert (Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago)** who has announced his retirement from seminary teaching this spring. Pastor Bangert is a member of this Synod.

+Our Christian sympathy to **Pastor Peter Vorhes (Faith, Calumet)** and his family upon the death of Pastor Peter's father, Pastor Arthur Vorhes, 84. He died in Eau Claire, Wisconsin on Sunday, April 13, 2008. Pastor Arthur Vorhes served congregations and Lutheran Bible Camps in a long and distinguished ministry. May God comfort us in the Risen Christ.

+ Our Christian sympathy to the family of **Shirley Price (Trinity, Ishpeming)** who died on April 15, 2008. Shirley was our Synod

Assembly's long-time Registrar, Chair of the Credentials Committee and volunteer in the Synod Office. She was the first parish secretary I worked with when I became a pastor in Ishpeming in 1980. She was a wonderful Christian person of deep faith and commitment to God's Church. May God bless her memory in our midst!

+Thomas A. Skrenes

Bishop

You are invited to visit the newly renovated offices of the Northern Great Lakes Synod and

Lutheran Social Services

Sunday, May 18, 2008

1029 N. Third Street

Marquette, MI 49855

2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. ET

*DEDICATION 4:30 P.M.*

*Tours will  
ferred and  
ments will  
able.*



*be of-  
refresh-  
be avail-*

# Thank You

## **Seminarian Support**

Gloria Dei, Hancock  
Calvary, Minocqua

## **Lutheran World Relief**

Calvary, Rapid River  
Zion, St. Ignace  
Siloa, Ontonagon

## **World Missionary Support**

Calvary, Rapid River  
Bethel, Ishpeming  
Mission United, Pelkie  
Trinity, Stambaugh  
Salem, Bark River  
Trinity, Rhineland

## **Lutheran Campus Ministry**

Calvary, Rapid River  
Grace, Gwinn  
Bethany, Amasa  
Bethel, Ishpeming  
Trinity, Ishpeming

## **Mission Outreach**

St. James, Rudyard

## **ELCA Disaster Funds**

Grace, South Range

Bethany, Amasa

Mission United, Pelkie

## **Lay School for Mission**

Trinity, Rapid River

## **Endowment Fund**

Zion, Manistique  
Rev. Jonathan & Jean Schmidt

## **Tanzania Teacher's Gift**

Bishop Thomas & Luanne Skrenes  
David & Mary Lou Blomquist  
Rev. Robert & Deloris Langseth

## **Bishop's Discretionary Fund**

Orice & Harlan Walters  
Stephanie Spelich



Pastors Lori & Lee Liverance  
Ordination at Our Saviour's, Iron Mountain  
April 13, 2008

+ From the Assistant to the Bishop +  
**Pastor Jennifer Johnson Wrege**

*One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another,*

*and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him,*

*"Which commandment is the first of all?"*

*Jesus answered, "The first is,*

*"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;*

*you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,*

*and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*

*The second is this,*

*"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

*There is no other commandment greater than these."*

**Mark 12:28-31**



Turkeys and fish were the culprits! Fish and fowl were the critters behind the high tech stress of the Wisconsin DNR's licensing computers a few weeks ago. Hunters and fishers alike complained as they stood in long and slow lines trying to purchase either their turkey hunting license or their fishing license or both. Some reported they left the line, stomped off to parking lots and to their cars, drove home, only to find similar delays in processing at the DNR website itself. Anglers were asked to hold off buying their fishing licenses while all the turkey hunters took care of their spring turkey hunting licensing needs. In Wisconsin, fishing licenses expire March 31, so at the point all the hits were happening at [dnr.gov](http://dnr.gov), the anglers could wait a day or so for things to settle down.

I heard about this ability of fish and fowl to give rise to high tech computer stress on a radio program that was on the air as I drove to a meeting. The host was interviewing a fishing expert who was touting the benefits of a "catch and release" style of fishing. Later on, I listened to a second interviewer talk with a renowned baker. My ears perked up when the host asked the baker how she remained so fit and trim even as she spent a great deal of

her time baking very tasty desserts, pastries and breads (this baker had written a cookbook with now fewer than a dozen chocolate brownie recipes in it! And, they all sounded yummy!). The baker replied, "Oh, that's easy! I have a 'catch and release' policy for my baking. I catch a good recipe, bake it, and give it away to others. My neighbors love me!"

What would you think about a "catch and release" strategy applied to faith. It might work something like this:

Having been caught by the power of the gospel of Jesus, we become aware that we have been released back into the world.

Having been caught by a renewed awareness that each of us have gifts that are needed for ministry, we are released to share those gifts in ministries that make Christ visible and help others.

Having been caught up by the wind and fire of the Holy Spirit, we are released from all the things that hold us back from joyfully and courageously following Jesus wherever he leads.

Catch and release....

Catch and release.....

Catch and release....

When you go fishing (or to the Friday night fish fry), if "catch and release" crosses your mind (and, I hope it does) maybe it will be because the time is right to share a word or two about your faith, invite a friend to worship, or listen carefully to the challenges, difficulties or fears of the friend who is with you.

Blessings!



## Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors

**Bethel, Ishpeming - Associate Pastor Vacancy**  
**Trinity, Stambaugh & Bethany, Amasa - Pastor Doug Johnson**  
**Central, Menominee - Pastor Ken Michaelis**  
**Bethany, Covington & Trinity, Trout Creek - Pastor Scott Williams**  
**Holy Cross, Baraga - Pastor Ted Koehl**  
**Bethany, Mohawk - Pastor Peter Vorhes**  
**Immanuel, Escanaba - Pastor Jonathan Schmidt**  
**Grace, Gwinn - Pastor Chad Christensen**  
**First, Ewen & Our Saviour's, Paynesville - Pastor Gerald Anderson**

As we compare the first quarter of calendar years 2007 and 2008, we see that Mission Support giving is flat, even though pledged support decreased by 1.2% or \$12,610. Mission Support gifts are up in FY2008 by \$17,694. Designated gifts are up due in part to increased giving to World Hunger, Fortune Lake, and Lutheran Campus Ministry. God's blessings abound in the life of the Synod. May our response to those blessings bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

| As of 3/31/08    | 2007      | 2008      | \$ Change | % Change |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Pledged Amount   | 1,045,301 | 1,032,691 | -12,610   | -1.2%    |
| Amount Received  | 193,033   | 193,504   | +471      | +.2%     |
| Designated Gifts | 29,713    | 34,433    | +4,720    | +15.9%   |



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**WE'RE ON THE WEB**

**[WWW.NGLSYNOD.ORG](http://WWW.NGLSYNOD.ORG)**

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**ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR MAY 2008**

**[www.prayfaithfully.org](http://www.prayfaithfully.org)**

**Again this year, devotions for May are written by confirmation students from our Synod. We thank these young people for sharing their gifts and their faith, and we encourage others to do so in the future.**

**May 4-10 / Calvary, Rapid River**

**May 11-17 / Palmer/Suomi Parish**

**May 18-24 / Trinity, Stonington**

**May 25-31 / Faith, Rock**