

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

NOTES & QUOTES

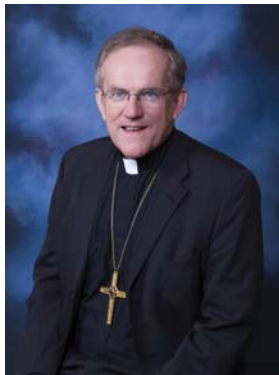
Volume 22, Issue 2

FEBRUARY 2009

HOLY CALL COMMITTEES!

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

tskrenes@nglsynod.org



Last night was a great evening. Sitting with a Congregational Call Committee from a congregation in our Synod, I listened carefully to the hopes and dreams of these people of faith. I wish you could have been with me. It was wonderful! We prayed with each other, and then the folks present at this meeting began to share their passion for the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was a great deal said about ministry and the need to make the worship services meaningful to a whole new generation. We shared our hopes for youth work. We all listened as the Committee spoke of the need for a renaissance of faith

and new commitment by the people of this one hundred plus year old congregation. The committee members spoke of evangelism and stewardship and building a new and improved physical plant that can be home to a congregation and an asset to the community.

The Call Committee was meeting to review recent interviews of candidates for their pastorate. I was delighted to hear again and again how important the pastor is to congregational leadership, but not as some modern “Pied Piper” who would accomplish all the ministry. Instead, they were looking for a person who could help them do their ministry. It was music to my ears! And it was not an unusual night.

The wonderful truth is that Call Committees around our Synod take very seriously their responsibility to seek God’s guidance when they are searching for a pastoral leader. In a sense, the committee that met last night was largely typical of most of our congregations who are looking for a new pastor. The lay people of the Synod know what challenges we have as a rural area, and these leaders appreciate the economic and other struggles that we all face. Our lay leaders know that money is a factor in this work, but they also know that finding the right pastor is a divine gift of God. In a sense, our Call Committees are seeking to discern God’s will. They are “Holy Call Committees!”



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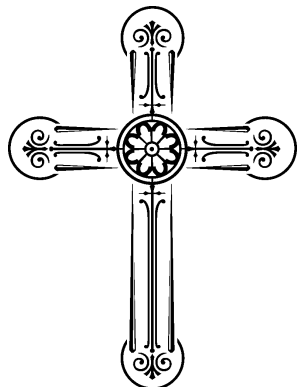
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THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

It was a good night. As I walked out the door of that meeting into the bitterly cold Upper Michigan winter, I smiled and thanked God that the privilege of serving as Bishop in this time and in this Synod is mine.

Lord, look with favor on the congregational leadership of our many churches that are in the midst of pastoral transition. Bless their Call Committees and Congregation Councils. Send your Holy Spirit on pastors who will serve your people in this Synod, and remind all of us that God is at work in our midst. Amen.



ASK, THANK, TELL NIGHTS

THREE IDENTICAL WORKSHOPS FOR CONGREGATIONAL COUNCILS,
STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

These evenings are scheduled this winter for workshops on generosity and giving! The focus will be on practical applications of Pastor Charles Lane's book, *Ask, Thank, Tell*.

Each session will involve a review of the book and the opportunity to develop strategies for our congregations to develop stewardship ministries.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009

6:30 - 8:30 p.m. CT

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

IRON MOUNTAIN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2009

6:30 - 8:30 p.m. ET

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

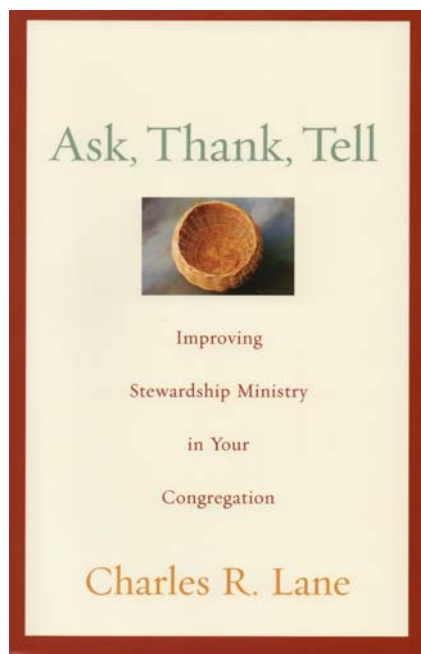
NEGAUNEE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009

6:30 - 8:30 p.m. ET

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH

HANCOCK



THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

Everyone who attends needs to bring a copy of *Ask, Thank, Tell*. If you do not have one, the book will be given to you! Please register by e-mail at ngls@nglsynod.org or by telephone to 906/ 228-2300 by February 7, 2009.

LATER THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM!!

My wife, Luanne, and I did not travel to the ELCA Conference of Bishops meeting in the Holy Lands in January. We decided that, because of the battles raging in Gaza, we would postpone our trip to Israel and the Palestinian Territories that was scheduled for early January. Conflict in the Gaza Territory has raised our anxiety, and we felt we would have a better experience at a different time later in the New Year. About twenty other bishops and spouses also did not attend this Conference of Bishops' event. We hope to make the pilgrimage later. Pray that peace and justice may prevail in the Holy Lands.

SYNOD STATISTICIAN Pastor James Duehring

Each year, congregations are required by our constitutions to collect and submit various statistics. We ask, "How many people are members of this congregation? How many worship on average? How many commune? How large is the education program? What were the total offerings in the year just past?" Those questions and others are asked so that an accurate statistical picture can be gathered of our Synod and of the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We can spot trends with these changing numbers, and we can plan for our future when our statistics are reliable. I am delighted to say that, last year, each and every congregation in this Synod submitted its statistical reports. Congratulations!

I have asked Pastor James Duehring of Prince of Peace in Marquette (Harvey), Michigan to serve as Synod Statistician. His responsibility is to help congregational leaders complete the reports, and to encourage all the churches to submit these statistics in a timely fashion. Please call upon Pastor Duehring at 906/ 249-3122, or call the Synod Office with your questions or concerns about all things statistical.

TRANSITIONS

+Congratulations to **Pastor Chad Christensen (Emanuel, Skandia)** who has accepted a Call to a congregation in Black Earth, Wisconsin. Pastor Christensen has served in our Synod since his ordination in 2000. Pastor Chad has been an important part of a number of Synod committees, and will be missed by his former congregation and by all of us in the Synod who worked with him. Thanks, Pastor, for your continuing ministry to the Lord Jesus and His Church!

+God bless **Pastor Nicholas Hopman (Grace, South Range and First, Dollar Bay)** on his recent ordination in Chicago. Pastor Hopman served in this Synod as an intern, a Licensed Lay Minister and now as a Pastor. His installation will take place on Sunday, February 22, 2009 at First Lutheran Church in Dollar Bay, 3:00 p.m. ET.

+**Timothy Mulvaney** has been appointed Licensed Lay Minister at First in Trenary. Tim comes to this service as a graduate of Lay School for Ministry and as lay leader at Bethany in Escanaba. His installation was on January 25, 2009. God bless his ministry!

+Our Christian sympathy to **Mrs. Kari Mansur and Pastor Craig Mansur (Chaplain, Bay Area Medical Clinic, Marinette)** on the death of Pastor David Hughes, father to Mrs. Mansur. God bless this family as they mourn father, father-in-law and grandfather. "In Christ shall all be made alive."

+Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop
tskrenes@nglsynod.org



Thank You

Lutheran World Relief

Messiah, Marquette
Holy Trinity, Chassell
Calvary, Rapid River
Immanuel, Negaunee
Zion, St. Ignace

Seminarian Support

Messiah, Marquette
Calvary, Minocqua
Faith WELCA, Rock
Zion, Ironwood
Bethany, Amasa
Rev. Jon & Diana Magnuson
St. James, Rudyard
Our Redeemer, Newberry

World Missionary Support

Trinity, Stambaugh
Calvary, Rapid River
Pioneer Lake, Conover
Mission United, Pelkie
Immanuel, Escanaba
Grace, Pembine

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Grace, Gwinn
Emanuel, Skandia
Bethany, Negaunee

Bethany, Amasa
Mission United, Pelkie
Bethlehem, Florence

Lay School for Mission

Trinity, Rapid River

ELCA Disaster Funds

Grace, South Range
Pioneer Lake, Conover
Zion, Ironwood
Christ Parish, Ironwood

Endowment Fund

Rev. Harry & Dorothy Andersen
Rev. Peter Vorhes & Liz Siivola
Rev. Robert & Deloris Langseth
Wayne & Eileen Stordahl

Skogman Scholarship Fund

Lloyd & Alice Jensen

Tanzania - Mosquito Netting

Pioneer Lake, Conover
Bishop Thomas & Luanne Skrenes
St. Paul's, Mass City
Rev. Doug & Marilyn Schoen
Angie Pfeiffer
Third World Handcrafts Shoppe
First, Iron River

Congregational Mission Support

Mission United, Pelkie for
Shepherd of the Sea, Copper Harbor

Kisarawe

Rev. Robert & Deloris Langseth

Kemppainen Scholarship Fund

Theodore Swanson

Temeke Lutheran Church in Tanzania

Gloria Dei, Hancock

Answer the Call - Seminarian Scholarship

Rev. Dale & Jo Skogman
Rev. John West
Rev. Robert & Deloris Langseth
Peter & Trudy Johnson
Rev. Jennifer Johnson Wrege & Marv Wrege
Rev. John & Jeannette Kuziej
Dora Jane Swanson
Bethel, Ishpeming
Bishop Thomas & Luanne Skrenes
Rev. Peter Vorhes & Liz Siivola
Richard & Evelyn Bjorklund
Rev. Gerald & Susan Anderson
Rev. Kenneth Lahners
Rev. Devon & JoAnne Barrix



+ From the Assistant to the Bishop +

Pastor Jennifer Johnson Wrege



So God created human-kind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

We both stood there – in front of the mirrors, washing our hands, talking on cell phones tentatively balanced between our chins and shoulders, and frowning. My fellow public restroom person was young and beautiful. Long blond hair, full blue eyes, clear and glowing complexion, tall and slender, she appeared full of life. Yet, she too was frowning at the image peering back at her in the mirror.

Though not intentionally eavesdropping, I heard her say to whomever she was talking with on her cell, “*I am so fat!*” She walked away. Let me tell you, she was not. Let me share a second point: I was thinking a similar thought about myself!

Looking in the mirror, we did not see women created in the image of God. We could not hear God declaring, after seeing everything he had made, that it was *very good*. The words spoken at baptism did not come to my mind at that moment: *Let your light shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*” The promise, “*Jennie, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the*

cross of Christ forever,” did not ring out in that moment.

Thanks be to God that my “slow to recall memory” has no effect on God’s promises. When I forget God’s word and promises to me, God continues to remember. God not only remembers, but God continues to be active in my life nudging and nurturing, guiding and protecting – almost always without my awareness, and many times without my praise or thanks. It is clear: God is not yet done shaping me into the person he is calling me to be. I am only on the way.

Perhaps, sometime soon, you will find yourself in front of the mirror. Instead of inspecting wrinkles, counting gray hairs, evaluating your chin, or considering the thickening of your eyebrows, you’ll get a glimpse of the light of Christ in you. And, the words will echo from your baptism, “*Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.*” Or, the Holy Spirit will cause to well up in you these words from Genesis 1, “*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them,*” and you’ll become aware the declaration means you, too!

Blessings!



Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors

Bethany, Covington & Trinity, Trout Creek - Pastor Scott Williams

Holy Cross, Baraga - Pastor John Autio

Immanuel, Escanaba - Pastor Jonathan Schmidt

Grace, Gwinn - Pastor Steve Gauger

First, Ewen & Our Saviour's, Ewen

Bethany, Perkins - Pastor Peter Andersen

Concordia, Palmer & Our Saviour's, Negaunee - Pastor Virginia Eggert

Immanuel, Negaunee - Pastor Peggy Rose

Holy Trinity, Chassell - Pastors Jimalee Jones & Peter Gundersen

First, Trenary - Pastor Stephen Gauger

St. James, Rudyard - Pastor Barry Levine

Zion, St. Ignace & Trinity, Brevort - Pastor George Kaiser

Emanuel, Skandia - Pastor James Duehring

Prince of Peace, Eagle River - (April 2009)

In calendar year 2008, the Synod as a whole received 100% of the mission support dollars pledged by our congregations. This was achieved by 33 congregations meeting their pledge, 32 congregations exceeding their pledge, and 30 congregations sending fewer dollars than pledged. We give thanks to God that the 100% goal was reached. However, this was \$29,829 less than what was received in 2007, which certainly impacted the mission of the Synod.

We pray that in 2009, the Synod will see an increase both in dollars pledged and number of congregations meeting their pledge. Our God blesses us abundantly. May our gifts in response be given joyfully as we do God's work together in the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

Betsy Koski, Bookkeeper

As of 12/31	2007	2008	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,045,301	1,032,591	-12,710	-1.2%
Amount Received	1,061,964	1,032,135	-29,829	-2.8%
Designated Gifts	224,327	230,785	+6,458	+2.9%



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SYNOD, ELCA**

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ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR FEBRUARY
2009

www.prayfaithfully.org

Feb. 1-7 / JoAnne Barrix, Faith, Rock

Feb. 8-14 / Lay School Students - Sayner Campus

Feb. 15-21 / Steve Olson, LSS

**Feb. 22-24 / Heather Oysti, First United Methodist
Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan**

During Lent, we will once again partner with our brothers and sisters of the Delaware/Maryland Synod.