

NOTES & QUOTES

Volume 21, Issue 6-7

JUNE / JULY 2008

“RENEW” SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2008

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

tskrenes@nglsynod.org



Over 350 members of our Synod, from nearly all of our ninety-four congregations, gathered under the theme “Renew” at Messiah Lutheran Church and Northern Michigan University in Marquette. It was the 21st Annual Assembly of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. With worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship, reports and action on resolutions, the Church in the Upper Peninsula and Northeastern Wisconsin gathered! Thanks be to God!

Together as a Synod:

- We heard about **Renewal** as a gift of the Holy Spirit. In the opening Eucharist service, this preacher said,
“Renewal is not a return to the good old days. Renewal is not a recreating of the 50’s or the 60’s or the 70’s or whenever, you felt, was the “golden age” for the Church. No, renewal is more radical than that. Renewal is returning to the root - to the center - to the core of the Christian faith - and to the core of our Christian faith disciplines - prayer, Bible study, and Service. Renewal is intimately connected, inevitably centered in, and for the modern 21st century Church - begins and ends with the power of God in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is Risen from the dead! That’s the news, and the source of all renewal.”
- Former Bishop Donald McCoid, representing the Churchwide ELCA and our Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, told us that Lutherans are the people that God has called to serve the poor of the world in many very difficult situations! In his sermon on Monday, Bishop McCoid shared that God has called us to a wonderful mission in this world. When we serve them, we serve the Lord Jesus! Pastor Lori Liverance (Our Saviour’s, Iron Mountain) helped us see renewal in a continuing growing way in her Monday morning Bible study. “The Spirit has a hold of us.”
- The Synod Assembly elected Voting members to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis. Elected were: Mary Blomquist (Zion, Felch); Clay Hilman (Gloria Dei, Hancock); Pastor Corinne Johnson (Our Saviour’s, Suomi and Concordia, Palmer); Rosemary Lar-



1029 N. Third St., Ste. A

Marquette, MI 49855

906/ 228-2300

906/ 228-2527 fax

ngls@nglsynod.org

www.nglsynod.org

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son (Trinity, Ishpeming); Dave Mason (Trinity, Stonington); Ray Miller (Immanuel, Escanaba); Pastor Norman Peterson (Immanuel, Rhineland).



“We adopted a Resolution that authorizes the Synod to seek to endow ten full tuition scholarships for our seminarians”

- The Synod Assembly elected: Rev. Francis Strong (Christ Parish, Ironwood); Rev. Kenneth Lahners (Trinity, Ishpeming); Susan Anderson (Sharon, Bessemer); and Willard Kocsovsky (Faith, Sault Ste. Marie); to the Synod Discipline Committee and forwarded the names of David Blomquist (Our Saviour’s, Iron Mountain); Steven Peffers, (Grace, Gwinn); and Steven Wesselhoft (Salem, Ironwood) to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2009 Nominating Committee for consideration as members on the Vocation and Education Program Unit of the ELCA.
- We recognized the ten graduates of the Lay School For Ministry and the outgoing Dean of the Lay School, Pastor David Echelbarger, who has received a pastoral call outside of our Synod. We also celebrated with Pastor Bill Shepard (25th), Pastor Robert Langseth (50th) and Pastor Chris Laursen (50th) as they commemorated milestones in ministry. We also thanked God for those congregations celebrating anniversaries of their organization: Ascension, Minocqua (25th), Christ the King, Escanaba (50th), Gethsemane, Wallace (125th), Salem, Bark River (125th).
- We adopted a Resolution that authorizes the Synod to seek to endow ten full tuition scholarships for our seminarians. We also adopted a Book of Faith Initiative resolution that calls on the Synod and its congregations to refocus ourselves on the Scriptures. You will hear more about these two resolutions soon! We also asked the Churchwide ELCA to streamline the Reinstatement of Clergy to the Roster of Ordained Ministers process in the Church.
- We adopted budgets for the current and next fiscal years, which included reduction in spending and a reduction in Synod program and staff because of reduced mission support by our congregations. The Youth Coordinator’s position was reduced to half time. Also adopted was a resolution from the floor encouraging special financial appeal giving for general benevolence, percentage pledging by our congregations to Synod mission support, and the formation of a Synod “Dream Team” by the Synod Council to “envision who we are, and what we are up to, as God’s people...and to formulate and articulate a vision of hope for our people...”
- We ate together, laughed, renewed friendships and prayed for each other formally and informally. In a short twenty-hour Assembly we shared our lives!
- We received offerings - wonderful generous Christ-centered offerings:
 - \$16,092.99 - ELCA World Hunger
 - \$2,592.41 - Synod Seminarian Scholarships
 - \$2,592.40 - Companion Synod Malaria Mosquito Net Ministry

THANKS BE TO GOD!

EVALUATIONS BY VOTING MEMBERS!

Each year we ask the persons present at the Synod Assembly to tell us their thoughts and give us ideas for future gatherings of our Synod. About 150 persons returned evaluations. According to the responses, the Synod Assembly was in the words of many people: **“Excellent, wonderful worship, well run.”** The Synod Assembly Planning Committee and the Synod Council review the evaluations carefully. Here are a few thoughts from Assembly members and my comments:

THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

Evaluation Thoughts / My Comments

The Musicians were great - bring them back. Yes!

We need a three-day Assembly. Not enough time. Some people prefer a two-day Assembly and some a three-day Assembly. We have both in different years. In 2009, we have a three-day Assembly.

An 8:00 a.m. starting time is too early for Central Time people. Yes, it is very early. However, if we started an hour later we would end an hour later and that may be less popular. A two-day Assembly requires a very busy full day.

All materials for the Assembly should be sent out at one time. Yes, that would be great. The Synod bylaws require we send you a "Pre-Assembly Report" thirty days before the Assembly. The financial materials (because of the Audit) could not be available thirty days before the Assembly and needed to be sent out later. Perhaps we should change the bylaw - we will study it!

We missed the Third World Shoppe. Augsburg needs more materials. The Third World Shoppe decided not to come this year. We will suggest to Augsburg that a more complete inventory to sell to all of us be available next year.

Why was the Key-Note Presentation cut short? No one told Bishop Don McCoid to shorten his presentation. He decided that on his own.

We need better coffee! Yes, and cheaper coffee too! It cost the Synod about \$15 a gallon.

The best Synod Assembly we have attended! Thank you! I will pass that comment on to Pastor Virginia Eggert, our excellent Synod Planning Committee Chair.

THANK YOU SYNOD COUNCIL!

Every year at Synod Assembly we elect the members of our Synod Council. Sixteen lay and clergy from our eight Conferences gather four times a year and are the Board of Directors of the Synod. They serve you well. Leaving office this year after one or two terms of service are: **Phyllis Gottschalk (St. James, Marinette); Elmer Moisio (Messiah, Marquette); Rev. Francis Strong (Christ Parish, Ironwood); and Bruce Tusa (Bethany, Amasa).** We thank God for their leadership, wisdom and important service to the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Elected at the Synod Assembly to the Synod Council for three-year terms are: **Rev. Gerald Anderson (Sharon, Bessemer); Rev. Katheryn King (St. James, Rudyard); Karen Kolstad (Zion, Marinette); Richard (Chic) LaFave (Grace, Gwinn); and Terry Langenberg (First, Iron River).** Continuing on the Synod Council are: **David Eitland (St. James, Rudyard); Rev. Warren Geier (Bethany, Ishpeming); Rev. Lee Goodwin (Our Savior's, Marinette); Rev. Michael Laakko (United, Crystal Falls); Daniel Laatsch (Prince of Peace, Eagle River); Barb Maines (Shepherd of the Lakes, Sayner); Dave Mason (Trinity, Stonington); Judy Mattson (Zion, Skanee); Jean Sovey (Bethany, Escanaba); and Rev. Peter Vorhes (Faith, Calumet).** These are visionary leaders who are passionate about our ministry together, here in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Northeastern Wisconsin.

SEXUALITY SOCIAL STATEMENT HEARINGS

Elsewhere in this Synod newsletter are the details for the three hearings on the proposed first draft of the ELCA Human Sexuality Statement. These three hearings will occur under the sponsorship of this Synod. **We will have a June 24th hearing in Iron Mountain and two hearings on June 25th in Cheboygan, Michigan.** I encourage you to come and to express your opinions on the proposed first draft. All of our members are welcome to come and to listen and to speak. Remember these important points:

The hearing is about the material within the draft statement. You must have read the document before the hearing in order to speak. You can download the draft by going to www.elca.org/faithfuljourney.

A prepared written statement is the best! We want you to give your statement orally and then give the recording secretary at the hearing the written statement. There will be time limits for individual speaking.

Of particular interest to the Task Force is what participants believe will strengthen the document. Identify points in the document you support and points you would change, add to, or adjust!

There are about ninety of these hearings scheduled around the Church. They are important, and I want you to come and do your best thinking for the good of God's Church.

TRANSITIONS

+ God bless **Pastor Lee Goodwin** as he has resigned his parish call to **Our Savior's in Marinette**. He has served in Marinette since 1990. He has accepted a Call to a grant funded position as Executive Director of the Sabbath Project, a ministry within our Synod. It is a great opportunity for Pastor Goodwin! We look forward to working with him in this new capacity.

Thomas A. Skrenes
Bishop

ARE YOU RECEIVING E-NOTES ?

Twice a month the Synod Office sends out an electronic e-mail newsletter. It is available for any person who wishes to receive it! Send us your e-mail address at npls@nplsynod.org and you will be added to the list. Congregations are encouraged to send in their council member addresses.

FIRST CALL THEOLOGICAL EVENT

The First Call Theological Education Fall Event will be held November 9-12 at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wisconsin. Mark your calendars now, and watch for information to arrive in your mailboxes during the latter part of August or early part of September. This is one component of a three-year structured program of theological education that has been mandated by the ELCA and is designed to assist newly called leaders in the transition to rostered ministry. This year will be especially exciting, as we will have a very rare opportunity to have Stan Olson, Director of the Vocation and Education Unit, and Mark Allen Powell, New Testament Professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary together at one time for several days. This year's First Call rostered leaders are indeed fortunate! Our theme is "Building Biblical Fluency in the Local Congregation," and we will be focusing on the "Book of Faith Initiative." You can learn more about this at:

<http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith/>

VIEW FROM THE VICE PRESIDENCY

Pauline Kiltinen

On Monday afternoon, the 19th of May 2008, two minutes early even at 3:58 p.m., Bishop Tom Skrenes adjourned the two-day Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly. It was my first Assembly experience as Synod Vice President, and things went well.

Here are some of my upbeat memories:

- singing with gusto new ELW liturgies and hymns, accompanied by a marvelous band arranged by Luke Smetters;
- taking in with awe the long line of clergy and assistants below, and the high-flying ribboned banners above, at the Opening Eucharist at Messiah;
- passing a \$2,000,000 fund raising project, "Answer the Call", for Seminary Scholarships that are going to make a huge difference to our seminarians and the congregations they will serve;
- welcoming Adam Wilhelm from LSTC, and Pastor LeRoy Remmers from Wartburg, the two seminaries related to our Synod;
- giving exposure and a hearty go-ahead to the "Book of Faith" initiative in our churches, with LSTC graduate Rev. Warren Geier heading the effort;
- hearing good words on the Assembly theme, "RENEW!" from Rev. Donald McCoid, Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the ELCA;
- speaking with delegate Sue Boback whose son, Daniel Adam Sorensen, graduated in May 2007 with a Master of Divinity from LSTC;
- approving budgets, ably and efficiently explained by Synod Treasurer Rev. Steve Cowen, carefully prepared in the face of lower Synod income;
- and discussing and accepting a resolution encouraging the Synod, via the Synod Council, to form a "Dream Team" of visionaries, shakers and movers to re-vision, re-energize, and re-fuel the Synod. Re-fuel as in raise those funds!

It was a memorable and good time. God was with us. Let's do this again!

THANK YOU

Mission Outreach

St. James, Rudyard
WELCA, Ironwood

Lutheran World Relief

Holy Trinity, Chassell
Holy Cross, Baraga
Calvary, Rapid River
Bethany, Negaunee
St. Mark's, Marquette

Lutheran Campus Ministry

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

Seminarian Support

Howard & Judy Mattson
Bethany, Amasa

Pastors' Debt Retirement

Holy Trinity, Chassell

Tanzania Health Care

Christ Lutheran Parish, Ironwood
Bishop Thomas & Luanne Skrenes

Lutheran Disaster Funds

Christ Lutheran Parish, Ironwood

Bethany, Escanaba
Salem, Ironwood

World Missionary Support

Bethel, Ishpeming
Trinity, Stambaugh
Trinity, Rhineland
Pioneer Lake, Conover
Zion, Ironwood
Calvary, Rapid River

Lay School for Mission

Trinity, Rapid River

Tanzania Teacher's Gift

Duane & Rita Palomaki

Bishop's Discretionary Fund

Trinity, Stambaugh
Suomi Conference



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

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house,

and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light.

Psalm 36:7-9



It happened in the blink of an eye: a woman, out and about on her morning bicycle ride, was pumping along the paved edge of a Wisconsin country road, and sharing that road with others who were riding in cars and making their way to worship when, apparently unaware of her presence, a driver made the right hand turn into the parking lot driveway, making it impossible for the woman, who was also pedaling her bike on the right side of the road, to stop in time to avoid the crash. In an instant she was down. Her bike, now broken in two, was mangled at her side. There was no doubt. The woman was injured, and in more than one place.

There was a flurry of activity. Nurses who were members of the congregation and already seated in the sanctuary, became the first responders. A team of men assigned themselves the task of traffic control. 911 was called on several cell phones. The pastor, in full vestments, joined the group surrounding the injured woman and offered prayer. When attempts to call the woman's husband failed, two determined women left the scene and went to find him. The police arrived. First responders arrived. The fire department rescue unit arrived. The ambulance arrived.

Alone, sober, quiet, and slightly shaking, an elderly man looking to be in his mid-eighties watched the activity happening around the woman with an intensity that revealed his growing sense of guilt, responsibility, panic, and fear. The policeman walked over and began interviewing him, then left. Left alone now again, I walked over to him, introduced myself, and asked if there was anyone with him I could get for him inside the church or

if there was anyone I could call to come and be with him. It was "No" to both. The policeman came back, this time with a camera, and motioned that he ought to come with him to take pictures of his car.

He returned to his place of observation where I was waiting for him. We stood together, saying few words, but praying for the bicyclist, her family, and for this very contrite and sorry driver. When the ambulance left, we made our way into worship. The preacher was well into his sermon. A few folks turned toward the back of the sanctuary. It was immediately apparent that others who had been at the scene had made their way back to worship as well: the very first nurse responders, members of the fire department rescue unit who had responded, the eye-witnesses who were first on the scene, the man who had run to his car to retrieve a blanket. We sat in the back, both of us trying to blend.

The congregation made their way through the creed, prayers, sharing of the peace, the Words of Institution to the distribution of the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Then we knew it! We were participants and witnesses to the grace of Jesus Christ to forgive sins, to bind us together in his body, to give new life, to be present with us, to bestow grace – because there we were: the first responders, members of the fire department rescue team, the eye-witnesses, the driver, the women who went to get the biker's husband and family, and all of us who were sharing in the tragedy and receivers still of God's great gift of Jesus Christ. What a wonder! What a holy sight! How powerfully did God make his presence known in those moments!

In joy and in sorrow; in health, injury or sickness; in hope and in our hopelessness; in our difficulties and our successes; in our delights and in our frustrations – God is present at work in our lives and in the lives of others so that God may bless us.

Blessings!



Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors

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

Our Savior's, Marinette - Pastor Nick Johannes

Immanuel, Negaunee

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." - Psalm 118:24 (NRSV)

"The beautiful summer days that the Lord has made are upon us! May we all remember that it is the Lord who so richly blesses us, and respond by joyously giving back to God through the work of His Church. Through May 31, congregational giving is more than \$29,000 less than last year. May the congregations of this Synod make this financial challenge into an opportunity to trust our Savior by passing on the first fruits of the offerings received this summer so that the work of the larger Church will not suffer." (Betsy Koski, Bookkeeper)

As of May 31	2007	2008	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,045,301	1,032,591	-12,710	-1.2%
Amount Received	360,697	331,651	-29,046	-8.1%
Designated Gifts	69,013	76,081	+7,068	+10.2%



**NORTHERN GREAT LAKES
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1029 N. Third Street, Ste. A
Marquette, MI 49855

Phone: 906-228-2300
Fax: 906-228-2527
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ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR JUNE / JULY
2008

www.prayfaithfully.org

June 1-7 / Pastor Art Weiss , Executive Director, Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp

June 8-14 / Nikole Kuzak, Office Manager, FLLC

June 15-21 / Ruth Snyder, Eden, Munising, FLLC Board

June 22-28 / Ruth Warmanen, United, Crystal Falls, FLLC Board; and Sophie Scholer, First Lutheran FLAME

June 29-July 5 / Soren Schmidt, Program Director, FLLC

July 6-12 / Pastor Bill Jacobson, Zion, Metropolitan, FLLC Board

July 13-19 / Wendy Black, Trinity, Rhinelander, FLLC Board

July 20-26 / Lori Hunter, AIM, Prince of Peace, Eagle River

July 27-Aug. 2 / Lucy Korhonen, Food Service FLLC