

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

NOTES & QUOTES

Volume 21, Issue 12 & Volume 22, Issue 1

DECEMBER 2008 & JANUARY 2009

WINTER

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes
tskrenes@nglsynod.org



On December nights when darkness comes

I think of the earth asleep

Dressed in snow, the trails of summer covered over,

Cold gusts of polar winds are blowing.

The earth rests.

*

On January mornings before the dawn wakes creation

The woods lie quiet.

Are the trees dead? We see no movement, no life, only blackness.

Hidden in their safety, the animals of the forest also sleep.

Waiting for the day.

*

Winter comes to the human spirit.

Darkness, age, illness, fear.

Like the winds of winter, we see ourselves hurt, misunderstood and alone.

The Spirit awaits and chooses God's moment

To make all things new.

* * *

Amid the world's bleak wilderness,

A vineyard grows with promise green, the planting of the Lord himself.

Vine, keep what I was meant to be

Your branch,

With your rich life in me.

Jaroslav Vajda



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THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

“God has placed us together in this part of God’s world....”



**A blessed
Christmas
and New
Year to all!**

FOUR PILLARS Our Life Together

What are the Four Pillars?

God has placed us together in this part of God’s world. As a Synod, our ninety-four congregations in northeastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula are seeking to “walk together” as we serve the truth of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

What is our work as a Synod?

As a part of our congregations, you are the Northern Great Lakes Synod. Together, with the people of the other sixty-four Synods, we are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In this Synod, for this time in history, I see our work together as:

- +Sharing the Faith
- +Supporting this Ministry
- +Strengthening our Leaders
- +Renewing Congregations

The work of our Synod has many parts. Congregations, this Synod and our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are called by God to “bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.”

What would a “renewed congregation” look like?

Every one of our congregations wants and needs renewal. Every lay leader in this Synod sees the need, the potential and the reality of renewal. Renewal is life and evidence of the work of the Spirit of God. I see renewal in many ways. A few examples:

- *Inspiring worship
- *Mission focused on Jesus Christ reaching out to those outside the Church
- *Deeply rooted in Bible Study and prayer
- *Members growing in their discipleship by service, encouragement and sharing
- *A willingness to change

There is no easy way for a congregation to thrive. There is, however, one constant theme in energized and growing congregations - prayer and Bible study.

THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

“ASK, THANK, TELL, NIGHTS”

“The goal of our stewardship ministry is to help God’s people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them.”

-Charles R. Lane “Ask, Thank, Tell”

Three evenings are scheduled this winter for workshops on giving! These identical events will focus on Pastor Lane’s book, and will build on his presentation in our Synod this past fall.

Each session will involve a review of the book, “Ask, Thank, Tell” and will give opportunity to begin to develop “hands on” strategies for our congregations to further develop stewardship ministries.

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. CT

Tuesday, February 10

First Lutheran, Iron Mountain

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. ET

Thursday, February 12

Bethany, Negaunee

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. ET

Thursday, February 19

Gloria Dei, Hancock

Every one 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 before February 7th.

E-mail the Synod Office with your interest at ngls@nglsynod.org

INTHE HOLY LANDS

January 5–16, 2009

Luanne and I will be attending the ELCA Conference of Bishops meetings in Israel and in the Palestinian Territory in January. The Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Lands will be our host as most of the ELCA bishops and spouses will be visiting and meeting with Jewish, Muslim and Christian people in and around the great holy sites of our faith.

Since we have never been to the Holy lands, Luanne and I are very much looking forward to visiting the places where our Lord Jesus lived. More than just a tour, this visit will also include opportunities to speak with leaders of the various governments and religious communities that make up this important and troubled area. We plan to visit Palestinian refugee camps, Jewish memorials and Christian churches.

It is our hope that this visit will inform our preaching, teaching and advocacy for the people of the Holy Lands as they pursue justice and peace for their peoples. Please pray for us in our trip and for all of God's people. Please pray for the peace of Jerusalem!



TRANSITIONS

+Congratulations to Nicholas Hopman upon his recent Call to serve as Pastor of First Lutheran in Dollar Bay and Grace Lutheran in South Range. He has been serving as their Licensed Lay Minister. His ordination will be in the near future. God bless Pastor-elect Hopman and his wife, Mary.

+On November 16, 2008, Pastor James Wendt was ordained a Minister of Word and Sacrament and was installed as the pastor at Our Savior's in Marinette. We thank God for Pastor Wendt's ministry, and welcome his wife, Laura, and their five children to our Synod.

+Thank you, Pastor Tari Stage-Harvey (Zion, St. Ignace and Trinity in Brevort) for your more than nine years of ministry in this Synod. Pastor Stage-Harvey and her spouse, Kirt, and children will be leaving "the lower 48" and moving by the end of the year to Alaska where Pastor Tari has been called to serve a congregation in Juneau. Blessings to this family as they follow the Call of God!

+Thomas A. Skrenes

Bishop

tskrenes@nglsynod.org





Thank You !

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Bethany, Amasa

Grace, Gwinn

Lutheran World Relief

Covington-Trout Creek

Zion, Manistique

Mission United, Pelkie

Immanuel, Negaunee

Our Saviour's, Iron Mountain

Calvary, Rapid River

Bethel, Ishpeming

Holy Trinity, Chassell

World Missionary Support

Bethel, Ishpeming

Faith, Rock

Grace, South Range

Trinity, Rhineland

Trinity, Stambaugh

Calvary, Rapid River

ELCA Disaster Fund

Sharon, Bessemer

Grace, South Range

Emanuel, Skandia

Mission United, Pelkie

Bethany, Amasa

Salem WELCA, Ironwood

Seminarian Support

Sharon, Bessemer

Calvary, Minocqua

St. James, Rudyard

Lay School for Mission

Trinity, Rapid River

Companion Synod Support

Trinity, Rhineland

Kisarawe

Trinity, Rhineland

Bethany, Escanaba

Tanzania Mosquito Netting

St. Paul's, Mass City

SWO

Immanuel, Menominee

Gloria Dei, Hancock

Immanuel, Rhineland

Endowment Fund

Rev. Rudolph & Darley Kemppainen

Bishop Thomas & Luanne Skrenes

Orice & Harlan Walters

Rev. John & Jeannette Kuziej

Rev. Chad Christensen



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



*“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.”
 Matthew 1:24*

Sitting across the waiting room was a young woman obviously in pain. She was waiting, as Marv was and I along with him, for blood work, x-rays, and cat scans. From deep down in the corner of her winter coat, she retrieved her cell phone and dialed up a call. Now, it was very quiet in this waiting room with no TV droning on in the background or music gently covering the silence. Though I tried to focus every ounce of my attention on my knitting, it was impossible not to hear what she was saying.

She spoke with a woman, quickly telling her that her battery was low, that they thought it was her appendix, and she was going to have more tests. She began to say that she was now waiting at the lab when her cell phone just quit working. She hammered down “flip” of her flip phone as she cried, using a more emphatic tone of voice, “Dang!”

Minutes went by. Marv was called back for his blood work and x-rays. A staff person entered the waiting room and informed this young woman that she was going to transfer a call for her to the phone there. Her grandma was on the line and wanted to talk with her. Quietly, they talked about what was happening, as well as what might, or could, happen. Surgery seemed to be a possibility. While, of course, I heard only one side of this conversation, it sounded like, perhaps, one of Grandma’s concerns had to do with how her granddaughter was doing. Between wiping tears that were running down her cheeks, she tried to assure her grandma that she was only bored. She said, “I’m just bored out of my mind.” I’m not convinced that her grandmother was fooled, but I know none of us in that waiting room were. A wave of compassion washed toward this young woman from all of us as she returned to her chair, wiping her red, swollen eyes, and blowing her nose. I’m thinking, “Honey, you don’t look bored out of your mind; you look scared out of your mind.”

She looked over at me and caught me watching her. I smiled as empathetic a smile as I could conjure up. I wanted to get up out of my chair and sit down in the chair next to hers. I wanted to offer the possibility of a conversation or prayer or both. Oh, I prayed for her – from the chair to which I seemed glued.

I am back home now. At my desk, I am looking at three “Christmas Wish Lists” – one from each of the twin grandkids, Blake and Brandon, the third from special needs son, Shaun. They appear surprisingly alike, even the handwriting. Each one is a list of seven or eight things – toys, electronic games and accessories, DVDs, CDs, or money. It would appear that they are firmly entrenched in the cultural Christmas we share.

Their lists trouble me. The lists trouble me because I am one in a cast of people and forces which have shaped the meaning and celebration of Christmas for them. I wonder what would appear on my “Christmas Wish List” should I compose one.

As I ponder on it, much like I imagine Mary pondered many things in her heart, it occurs to me that maybe it’s not my job to sign up to receive certain Christmas gifts – even if those gifts might be very good gifts like peace on earth, good will to all, an end to wars, abundant life for all, or freedom across the globe. Maybe my job, my Advent preparation, is to get ready to receive whatever gift it is that God is sending my way. Maybe I can get a clue about what this is like from Joseph, who forever set aside his plan for marriage and family and embraced the plan that God placed in front of him, which included building a home for pregnant fiancée, Mary, and, later, the one who would be named Jesus.

I did not set aside my plan for Thursday afternoon the day the anxious young woman and I sat across from each other in the waiting room to even consider what God’s plan may have been. I guess there is little doubt that I am, indeed, in need of the Advent opportunities to prepare to receive God’s gifts of Christmas. How about you?

Advent 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 Chad Christensen

First, Ewen & Our Saviour's, Paynesville - Pastor Gerald Anderson

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

Prince of Peace, Eagle River - (April 2009)

With two months left in the calendar year, mission support receipts are behind 2007 by more than double the anticipated amount. (We have budgeted a 1-2% decrease, and are currently running at a 2.9% decrease.) October mission support giving was the lowest it has been in at least ten years. However, our God is faithful in all things and abundant in blessings to us. We trust that God will provide for all the needs of our Synod so that the ministry we do in God's name will thrive even in challenging times. Thanks be to God for the faithful congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

Betsy Koski, Bookkeeper

As of 10/31	2007	2008	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,045,301	1,032,591	-12,710	-1.2%
Amount Received	787,231	764,563	-22,669	-2.9%
Designated Gifts	143,802	157,414	+13,612	+9.5%



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SYNOD**

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Dec. 2008 & Jan. 2009**

**ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR DECEMBER
2008 / JANUARY 2009**

www.prayfaithfully.org

Nov. 30-Dec. 6 / RoseAnne Aman, Our Saviour's, Iron Mountain

Dec. 7-13 / Steve Olson, Lutheran Social Services

Dec. 14-20 / Pastor Dorothy Lindstrom, Shepherd of the Lakes, Sayner

Dec. 21-27 / Bishop Thomas Skrenes

Dec. 28-Jan. 3 / Pastor Jennie Johnson Wrege

Jan. 4-10 / Lay School Class - Gladstone Campus

Jan. 11-17 / Pastor Len Gilley, Salem, Bark River

Jan. 18-24 / Pastor Doug Johnson, Bethlehem, Florence

Jan. 25-31 / Pastor Lee Goodwin, NGLS Sabbath Project

Mission Possible...

*Mission Partners – POPCORN
Prince of Peace Community Outreach to Neighbors
“U.P. 200 sled Dog Championship”
Bethany Lutheran Church – Republic, MI*

The Mission Partners Task Force is starting this column to invite you to share different mission and ministry developments in your congregation relating to mission beyond your parish. We urge you to share by writing about what you are doing so others may benefit and perhaps duplicate or adapt your efforts to their ministry setting.



POPCORN (Prince of Peace Community Outreach to Neighbors): U.P. 200 Sled Dog Championship

The **U.P. 200** is a competitive, 12-dog, mid-distance sled dog race, now entering its 20th year, (always on the third weekend of February). The race is approximately 240 miles in length and is a qualifying race for the Iditarod. A maximum limit of 40 mushers can be registered for this race.

What do mushers have to do with community outreach? Matthew 25 speaks of giving hungry and thirsty people food and drink, of inviting in strangers, of clothing people and visiting people. It doesn't mention giving people warmth in the cold, but that surely is the intent. And that's what members of Prince of Peace (Harvey) and associated groups have done for years.

Several Prince of Peace (POP) members have been/are active in the UP Sled Dog Association. The UP 200 race route used to go down Highway 41, directly on the road (one lane) patrolled by law enforcement officers with some POP members helping. Many motor vehicle drivers were upset with the resulting traffic congestion, not to mention the concern for safety. The teams turned left on Highway 28, proceeded on a snowmobile trail, and then turned right. The route ran through POP's parking lot. When railroad tracks adjacent to Prince of Peace were removed, the race course utilized the rails-to-trails path, crossing the bridge near Prince of Peace.

Some mushers begin the race with two sleds – one to provide extra weight to slow the dogs down to a maintainable pace. So after starting the race with two sleds in Downtown Marquette, mushers are welcome to drop off the extra sled at a drop-off point. POP eventually became an official drop-off point. One year Governor Granholm rode a sled to that point. In the first year as a drop-off point, we built a campfire where people could warm up. In following years POP invited people into the church to warm up; the Boy Scouts built a bonfire that, through the years, got bigger and bigger. We served hot drinks. Then came cookies, hot dogs, nachos, etc. for donations. The number of volunteers increased. Soon the parking lot was overflowing.

The Girls Scouts and Brownies who meet at POP helped provide and serve goodies, as did parents of the Chocolate Children's Co-op that was housed at POP. Boy Scouts (who met at POP) and their fathers patrolled the parking lot. Both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts monitored the path to keep it clear of playing children when the sled teams approached and created human guard rails to keep the dogs on track. More and more people kept coming each year to watch the race in a location where they had a place to warm up. You can see our location marked as a viewing location on the official trail map at http://www.up200.org/trail_map/map.htm. As race attendance swelled, so did POP's evangelism opportunities to introduce Prince of Peace Lutheran. Most years the POP viewing location has had huge crowds, second only to Downtown Marquette as a spectator place.

The parking lot patrol is no small feat. Scout fathers lead the effort, complete with radios, barricades, bright orange fencing, and a sled drop loop for the trailers picking up the sleds. The crew keeps order from turning into chaos. The event helps keep Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts active in our church and provides opportunities for earning community service hours. Thrivent supplies matching funds; the kids raise money for their organizations.

In February of 2009, POP will once again offer hospitality – food, drink, warmth, parking, sled drop-off, and information about our ministry. The newly rekindled middle school youth group will also be involved this season.

It's great to mention POP to someone and, ask, "Do you know where we are located?" and hear the response, "Oh, sure! My husband's a musher!"

Do you suppose some of the mushers know about the Mushites in the Bible?!
(Numbers 3:33)

Submitted by:
Gisele Duehring
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Harvey

Have a Mission Story to Tell? We'd love to share it with the NGLS!

To contribute your *Mission Possible* story for publication in *Notes & Quotes*, please email your article to:

Pastor Nancy Kauppi
danaKaup@ironbay.net

or

Pastor Jennie Johnson Wrege
jenjohn@nglsynod.org

Campus to Congregation



December 2008

News for our companions in the Northern Great Lakes Synod

from the campus pastor's office at Finlandia University

“side by side . . . growing in faith toward God and love toward neighbor”

Do You Hear What I Hear?

One of my all-time favorite songs of the Christmas season is *Do You Hear What I Hear?* Released in 1962, it was written as a plea for peace during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Noel Regney, who wrote the lyrics, has said that he was inspired to write the words “said the night wind to the little lamb” and “pray for peace, people everywhere,” while walking down the streets of New York. Seeing babies in strollers he was reminded of the promise of life in these new born babies. The paradox for him was to consider this promise while living in the midst of the threat of nuclear war .

I have the privilege of spending much of my time around young adults who are doing the hard work of defining their identities, discovering their vocations, and asking the important questions of life. I hear them expressing a desire for a more peaceful world. It is not the threat of nuclear war that they are concerned about, it is simply the way people treat other people. I hear students hunger for a deep and real connection with the people around them. They want to be treated with respect and be valued by others while at the same time they hunger for inspiration, power and tools to be a voice, a look, a touch of compassion to others. This is what I hear from

young people who are beginning to listen to the voice of Christ in their lives. Young people who are becoming aware that peace is found and practiced in our everyday interactions with others. Young people who have come to know that Christ fills us with his goodness and light so that we too, might be makers of peace on earth.

Said the king to the people
everywhere

“Listen to what I say”

Pray for peace people every-
where

“Listen to what I say”

The child, the child, sleeping
in the night, he will bring us
goodness and light; he will
bring us goodness and light!

Highlights

Nordic Film Series—Finnish American Heritage Center. The second Thursday of every month offers a 2:00 and 6:00 showing of a contemporary film from the Nordic countries. For more information call 487-7505.

Birch, Bog and Bedrock, work by artist Terry Daulton, is on display at the Finlandia University Reflection Gallery (Juttila Center) through November 28.

InSight: Views of the Finnish Landscape, the work of artist Desiree Koslin will be exhibited at the Finnish American Heritage Center Gallery from November 20—January 6.

The Community Mural Project, organized by Finlandia art & design student Jaimianne Amicucci and graduate Melisa Gronowski resulted in the beautification of a 40-foot long wall of the Juttila Center. Paint was donated and many were involved in this project that began with painting on October 21 and continued until October 31.

Campus Pastor's Corner

Do you see what I see?
A star.
The child.
Our hope.

-René Johnson, interim campus pastor and director of servant leadership



Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Scripture Shapes the Assembly

A workshop for worship Leaders, worship
Committee Members, and all who wish to deepen

The Bible shapes our patterns and actions in worship drawing us into God's saving story. The Book of Faith initiative sets the stage to explore the biblical foundations of worship and reflect on how the public proclamation of scripture brings the book of faith alive in the assembly. This event, hosted by Zion Lutheran Church, Skanee, MI as part of their Adult Education Program, invites all who seek to more fully engage the Word of God in worship and to reflect on the use of scripture in a variety of worship practices.

When: Thursday, January 29, 2009
Time: 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. ET
Where: Zion Lutheran Church
Skanee, MI
Cost: No charge!!!

In order to assist with planning, please rsvp to Judy Mattson at zlcs@up.net or call the church office at 906.524.6524 or Judy's home 906.524.5993 with the number of people from your congregation who plan to attend.

Directions to Zion Lutheran Church, Skanee, MI: From Hwy 41 in L'Anse, take E. Broad Street to downtown, then a right on N. Main Street. Zion Lutheran is approximately 15 miles down the road on the right. You will pass a small school house about 1/2 mile before the church. If you come to a point where the road goes only left or right you have gone about 4 miles too far!

