

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

NOTES & QUOTES

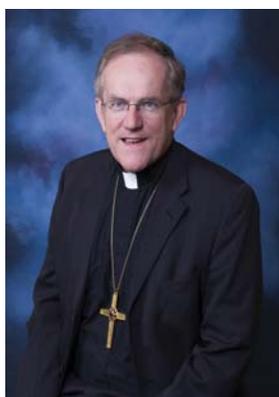
Volume 22, Issue 3

MARCH 2009

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN OUR SYNOD CHRIST-CENTERED, HEALTHY, CONFIDENT, SKILLED

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

tskrenes@nglsynod.org



How would you describe an excellent pastor? Would she or he be faithful, energized, humble, resourceful, creative? Would a pastor for your congregation be encouraging, presenting a strong evangelical witness, prayerful, with a growing connection to God's Word? Would a great pastor be both bold and sensitive? Your Synod wants these kind of people in service to the congregations and communities of North-eastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

How do we encourage our current generation of pastors, as well as identify people in our ninety-four congregations, that have gifts for future service in the ordained ministry? Who in your congregation has the potential to be a pastor? Have you talked with young people in high school or college about the Holy Ministry? And have you asked such a gifted person "Are you considering being a pastor? Is God calling you to the ministry?"

To do excellent ministry, our pastoral leaders must be trained. They attend seminary and study the Scriptures, Lutheran theology, our Christian heritage as well as learn the skills of preaching, teaching, counseling and leadership. Your Synod has made a priority of providing financial resources to our students who are in formation preparing to be pastors. Every full time NGLS seminarian preparing to be a pastor in this Church receives, from our Synod, a scholarship of \$4,000 per year. We, in the Northern Great Lakes Synod, should be thrilled that we are the leading Synod in the ELCA providing financial resources to our seminarians. And, in addition to that annual grant, an additional amount is awarded from named restricted semi-



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BISHOP'S PAGES 1-4

TRANSITIONS 4

PASTOR JENNIE
JOHNSON
WREGE 6

SYNOD
FINANCIALS 7

THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

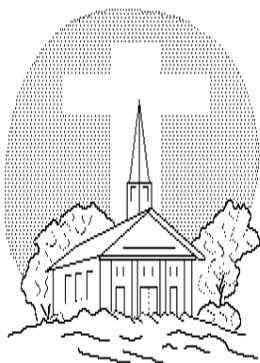
*Please pray
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narian grants that have been established. We are not satisfied with that, either, since individuals and congregations are in 2009 and in 2010 being asked to support "Answer The Call" - the effort to endow full scholarships for all of our Synod seminarians.

And one more thing...pray! Please pray that God will raise up men and women to serve in the Church as ordained ministers. We need a whole new generation of servants of the Cross who will accept responsibility to preach the word and share the Sacraments. Pray, too, that each of our congregations may see themselves as encouragers and supporters of our seminarians. Come Holy Spirit!

PROPOSED STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY AVAILABLE FOR YOUR REVIEW

The ELCA Proposed Statement on Human Sexuality and Report on Rostering Recommendations for gay and lesbian persons in committed homosexual relationships is now available for your review. You may read the report on the ELCA website (www.elca.org) These documents will be considered and commented on by Synod Councils and the Conference of Bishops this spring so that the ELCA Church Council, which meets March 27-30, can act on the proposals. The ELCA Church Council may bring these statements to the August Churchwide Assembly for discussion, possible amendment and possible adoption.



Synod Assemblies throughout the Church are asked to discuss these statements, and to offer resolutions to memorialize the ELCA Assembly to take specific action on these documents. In the Northern Great Lakes Synod, resolutions of approval, disapproval or amendment to the Proposed Social Statement and Rostering Recommendations may be considered. In order to be published in the 2009 Synod Pre-Assembly Report, all resolutions must be received by me by April 14. This is an important deadline and cannot be waived. Please also be reminded that Synod bylaw 7.11.60 and 7.11.61 govern resolutions. You may find the bylaws on our Synod website and in your most recent Synod directory. You may also contact me or Pastor Doug Johnson, Synod Secretary, for more information and guidance on the crafting of resolutions. I anticipate that we will have at least one forum during the Synod Assembly to discuss these statements.

THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

Please take time to read all the documents carefully. Please remember that these proposals before the Church are just that -- proposals. They can be amended by a deliberate and prayerful process. Please pray that God will bless our work together.

I LOVE CONFIRMATION MINISTRY!
It is a joy to teach young people about the Gospel

That is why I am so excited again this year about our Synod-wide confirmation ministry “Marked! With the cross of Christ forever” events! Come and bring your confirmation classes. There will be music, food, fun and God’s Word - a holy combination. These confirmation events will be held on:

Sunday, March 15 at Immanuel Lutheran in Escanaba, MI from 4-7:00 p.m. EST
and
Sunday, April 26 at Sharon Lutheran in Bessemer, MI from 4-7:00 p.m. CST

Registration deadlines are:
March 4 for the Escanaba event
April 15 for the Bessemer event

For more information go to:
<http://nglsynod.org/events-marked.html>

Don't let your young people miss out on this fun, Spirit-filled event!

Those in the ELCA Health Benefit Plan---
**TAKE THE HEALTH ASSESSMENT—THE DEADLINE
APPROACHES**

As of this writing, only sixteen members of the ELCA Health Plan in our Synod have taken the 2009 Health Assessment. We have a way to go if we are going to receive a 2% discount on the congregational billing for this year. If 75% of our rostered persons and spouses covered by the plan take the Assessment by March 31, congregations will receive this discount for the whole year. There are other cash benefits, too, for the plan member. We are talking here of real money as every congregation will save hundreds of dollars! This is an important opportunity to be good stewards! Please participate on-line today so we as congregations and plan members can see the financial savings.

Go to boardofpensions.org to access the Health Assessment site. The results of the health assessment give the ELCA Board of Pensions aggregate information about the health of the ELCA's pastors, church workers and spouses covered under the ELCA primary health plan, providing data on which to develop the plan for 2009 and beyond. It will also help the ELCA benefits provider to further develop ELCA leaders who are healthy in mind, body and spirit. This redesigned ELCA primary health plan offers monetary incentives for eligible pastors, church workers and spouses to take the assessment and pursue health improvement activities. The financial incentives were developed by the ELCA Board of Pensions to encourage the health plan's eligible pastors, church workers and spouses to become healthier by using their health benefits proactively.

TRANSITIONS

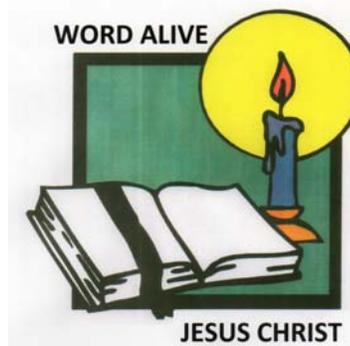
+Congratulations to Lori Hunter who was on February 8th commissioned as an Associate in Ministry and Installed at Prince of Peace in Eagle River. AIM Lori has been called to a ministry of administration, music and service to the people of the congregation. God bless Lori in this work!

+Congratulations to the people of Immanuel in Negaunee as they have called Pastors Steven and Marcia Solberg to serve as pastors. The Pastors Solbergs come to us from First Lutheran in Manitowoc. We welcome them and their two daughters into our Synod and ask God's blessings on their work in our midst. They will be installed on April 5 at 3:00 p.m. ET at Immanuel.

+Congratulations to Pastor Corrine Johnson on her call to serve as Director of Development and Public Relations at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp. She will be installed at the Camp at 3:00

p.m. CT on March 22, the beginning of the Camp's Annual Meeting.

+Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD ASSEMBLY, MAY 14-16, 2009

OPENING WORSHIP: Messiah Lutheran Church at 6:30 p.m. ET on Thursday, May 14.

RECEPTION honoring Tanzania visitors, Lay School for Mission Graduates and Clergy celebrating Anniversaries of Ordination or Retirement.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Audrey West, former Associate Professor of New Testament at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago.

WORKSHOPS AND FORUMS: Friday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. ET and 3:45 p.m. ET

FESTIVAL OF CHOIRS: Congregational choirs will perform alone, and then all will gather for a mass concert which will be spectacular!

QUARTERS FOR WORLD HUNGER will be collected Friday morning!

PRAYER AROUND THE CROSS: A simple service of intercessory prayer through scripture readings, songs, and prayer!

GUESTS FROM TANZANIA: Diocese Treasurer, Mr. Comelord Swai and his wife, Dr. Tultweni Mwinkua.

Thank You

World Missionary Support

Faith, Rock
Bethel, Ishpeming
Trinity, Stambaugh
Calvary, Rapid River

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Emanuel, Skandia
Trinity, Ishpeming
Bethany, Amasa
Bethany, Negaunee

Malaria Net Project

St. Paul's, Mass City
Trinity, Ishpeming

Kisarawe Lutheran School, Tanzania

Trinity, Rhineland
Our Saviour's, Iron Mountain

Lutheran World Relief

Prince of Peace, Marquette
Immanuel, Negaunee
Zion, Marinette
Zion, St. Ignace
Holy Trinity, Chassell
Calvary, Rapid River
Bethany, Escanaba

Seminarian Support

Calvary, Minocqua
Zion, St. Ignace

Lay School for Mission

Trinity, Rapid River

ELCA Disaster Funds

Grace, South Range

Answer the Call

Rev. Cori Johnson
Rev. LaVonne & George Stephenson
Judy Mattson
Helen Romeli
Dirk & Sue Manson
Rev. Virginia Eggert



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

*"Come to me, all you that are weary
 and are carrying heavy burdens,
 and I will give you rest.*

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn
 from me;*

*for I am gentle and humble in heart,
 and you will find rest for your
 souls.*

*For my yoke is easy, and my burden
 is light."*

Matthew 11:28-30



Meet two year old Chloe: She is the youngest person who has ever attended a Congregation Council Retreat where I have been either a participant or a facilitator. In the brief time – less than twenty-four hours – that she was “on retreat” with the rest of us, she charmed me. She is bright, loving, determined, loving, playful, well behaved and active. It appeared that her favorite toy was an alphabet puzzle. Huge and colorful puzzle pieces could be linked together – each piece a letter from the alphabet with a picture of something that began with the letter. Every piece had a straight edge so when the entire alphabet was strung out on the floor, the puzzle was about ten feet long. Once the first step of putting the puzzle together was completed, the next step was to walk up and down the puzzle itself several times. If this happened to pull one or two pieces apart, NO PROBLEM. Chloe simply bent down and fixed it. The third step was to take the puzzle apart and begin the process again.

Late in the afternoon, this congregation council was doing some work in small groups. Snacks had been brought out. Everyone was sharing chips and Doritos and bars and so on. Chloe had, a couple of times, made her way over to the table where the bag of Doritos was open. She would grab a handful and dance back to her mom at another table. I was watching her one of those times when she reached into the bag and grabbed an ambitious number of

Doritos. This time, on the trip back to her mom, she dropped one. No problem, she stooped to pick it up. While she was doing that, a couple more slipped out of her hand. Remarkably patient, she tried to recoup these two as well. While doing that, one of them broke in half so now there was another piece to retrieve. She was undaunted and persistent! No matter how many times she dropped or broke a Dorito, she would scoop it up again until there were several “too tiny” little pieces that she finally left on the floor and danced her way to her mom’s lap.

“O Chloe, “I thought to myself, “I hope you can keep dancing when little things don’t go quite the way you think they ought to go.”

It usually doesn’t work that way with me! As I work on projects that don’t go smoothly or the way I think they ought to move along, I tend to get anxious or frustrated or angry or perturbed or worry. I definitely do not dance! And, it usually takes me awhile to lean into the promises that Jesus points to in Matthew 11. (You could also check out Matthew 6:25-34.) The truth is, I need the prompting of the Holy Spirit to even recall those promises!

There is ample opportunity in our world today for persistent heightened anxiety. The recession is stubborn. The winter is long. It seems like there is always a health issue to “work on.” There is almost always more to do than time to do it. Easter seems far away.

Jesus invites us to put an end to our worrying and, instead, cast our cares on him while resting safe and sound in his arms...in sort of the same way that Chloe climbed up on her mom’s lap, rested her head on her mom’s shoulder, and munched on her Doritos.

Blessings!

Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors

Bethany, Covington - Pastor Scott Williams

Holy Cross, Baraga - Pastor John Autio

Immanuel, Escanaba - Pastor Jonathan Schmidt

Grace, Gwinn - Pastor Steve Gauger

First, Ewen; Our Saviour's, Paynesville; Trinity, Trout Creek - Pastor Gerald Anderson

Bethany, Perkins - Pastor Peter Andersen

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

Holy Trinity, Chassell - Pastors Jimalee Jones & Peter Gundersen

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)

As with all things, we trust that God will provide for the needs of our Synod's ministries. We thank all the congregations of the Synod for their consistent and generous support as we work together to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Note below that congregational pledges for 2009 are almost \$28,000 less than 2008.

Betsy Koski, Bookkeeper

As of 1/31	2008	2009	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,032,591	1,004,671	-27,920	-2.7%
Amount Received	63,917	56,288	-7,629	-11.9%
Designated Gifts	11,306	12,421	+1,115	+9.9%



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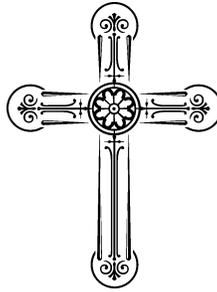
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ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR MARCH 2009

www.prayfaithfully.org

***DEVOTIONS FOR LENT ARE WRITTEN JOINTLY
BY CLERGY AND LAITY FROM THE NORTHERN
GREAT LAKES SYNOD AND OUR PARTNER
SYNOD OF DELAWARE / MARYLAND***