



InterActs

GROWING THIS CHURCH TOGETHER

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The Synod Band will be featured at the assembly this year.

Synod Assembly Is a Month Away

All Are Welcome to Opening Worship on May 6!

This year's opening worship will be Friday, May 6, 7:30 p.m. at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie.

All are invited to attend. Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson

will be preaching. The worship team is hard at work to plan an inspiring and meaningful worship to open our assembly.

This year the Synod Senior Band will begin the time of worship with prelude music starting at 7:00 p.m. Our goal is to fill St. Andrew Lutheran Church, so invite your family and friends to attend with you. It will be an uplifting Friday night!

Then on Saturday, the keynote speaker for the Assembly will be the Rev. Vivian Jenkins Nelson who is the co-founder of INTERRACE, a diversity think tank located at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, and is nationally recognized as a diversity



Spirited, inspirational assembly opening worship was held at Central Lutheran Church in 2010.

Synod Assembly, continued on page 2

Accompaniment: Insurance for *Our Malaria Work*

by Mary Simonson Clark, Minneapolis Area Synod coordinator for Our Malaria Work

“How can I get the ‘biggest bang for my buck’?” “What investment will yield the greatest return?” “How can I insure my donation is most effective for our neighbors who have the greatest needs?” We often ask these questions because we want to be good and faithful stewards of the abundance God gives to us.

In *Our Malaria Work*, the answer to these questions and the key to our good stewardship is “accompaniment.” Lutheran World Relief (LWR) explains accompaniment as:

Rooted in the Lutheran tradition that believes empowerment and justice happen only by ‘standing with,’ rather than ‘doing for’ others in need, accompaniment is a dynamic relationship between diverse partners with complementary resources and skills working together to empower poor communities to improve their lives. It recognizes that all poor communities already have resources and assets that can be harnessed to improve their own wellbeing. Building on these pre-existing assets, accompaniment is based on shared values and objectives, and uses jointly-developed strategies with flexibility and openness to achieve sustainable results. Characterized by mutual trust, respect, accountability, and transparency, the relationship contributes to each partner’s growth and learning while carrying out its primary goal of improving the well being of the poor.

(See: www.lwr.org/ourwork/accompaniment.asp)

The ELCA Global Mission unit echoes LWR’s explanation of accompaniment. The ELCA defines accompaniment as “walking together in solidarity practices and interdependence and mutuality. In this work, gifts, resources and experiences are shared with mutual advice and admonition to deepen and expand our work within God’s mission.” ELCA accompaniment efforts also share the following practice attributes:

- Respecting local autonomy
- Investing in local priorities
- Moving from *power over* to *power with*
- Acknowledging gifts and assets
- Building capacity
- Developing and encouraging local leadership
- Receiving gifts from others in an equal exchange that also teaches and transforms us

(See: www.elca.org/globalmission and click on “How We Work”)

[Our Malaria Work, continued on page 11](#)

Synod Assembly, continued from page 1



Bishop Johnson met with youth voting members at Synod Assembly in previous years too.

practitioner, trainer and researcher. Focusing on the theme of “A Community Gathered by Christ: From Stranger to Neighbor,” Jenkins Nelson’s message will center on radical hospitality: We thought that our role was to be hospitable to the stranger; now we know that it is to be transformed by the stranger.

A “Supper with the Bishop” Youth Voting Member Session

Just prior to the assembly worship on May 6 (6-7 p.m.), at St. Andrew Lutheran, Eden Prairie, youth voting members can enjoy pizza and conversation with Bishop Johnson, and get to know youth voting members from other congregations. Bring your questions for the bishop; he will have some for you too! Also, download the youth voting member informational sheet on the synod website.

Important Dates

- Assembly materials mailed to voting members – April 18
- Last day for refunds - April 22
- Registration closed - April 29 at midnight
- Opening Worship – May 6 at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie

New Venue! New Format!

Bishops' Theological Conference

for Rostered Leaders in the Saint Paul Area and Minneapolis Area Synods

September 25-27, 2011 at Heartwood Conference Center and Retreat, Trego, Wisconsin

Keynote speaker for the theological conference is Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, who will address "A Distinctively Lutheran Witness in a Culture of Mistrust." What kind of leadership does God's mission call for in a culture permeated by mistrust? Is there a distinctively Lutheran witness that we can make? How do we lead together in ways that build trust and focus energy on being engaged in God's mission together? How do we not only counter mistrust, but also examine whether we contribute to it in how we are prepared for leadership and how we engage each other around theological, moral and ethical issues?

Presentations on Theology, Scripture, and Ministry by Homegrown Theologians will be a new, exciting part of the conference. Topics include: The Church and the Arts: Tending Our Souls and Enlivening Our Ministries, Dr. Cindi Beth Johnson, United Theological Seminary; Left Behind: Hagar and Ishmael, Plus Others, Dr. Michael Rogness, Luther Seminary; The Divine Parent: What God's Interactions with the Patriarchs in Genesis Can Teach Us about Parenting and Raising Children of Faith, Dr. Peter Samuelson.

The location will also allow golf, canoeing on Namekagon River, hiking trails, solitude, and conviviality.

April 30 is deadline to save \$95,400

We need 65 percent of the eligible ELCA primary health plan members and spouses in our synod to complete the confidential Mayo Clinic Health Assessment by April 30. Doing so will help all of our synod's congregations and organizations save a collective \$95,400 on ELCA health contributions this year.



And remember, by taking the assessment, you will earn \$150 in your personal wellness account and you will be taking stock of your health. Healthy leaders do enhance lives and ultimately create a healthier ELCA community.

Take the assessment at www.elcaforwellness.org. Find instructions for taking the assessment in *Understand my benefits* at www.elcabop.org.

ELCA Glocal Mission Event June 10-11

The Minneapolis Area Synod will host an ELCA Glocal Mission Gathering on Pentecost weekend at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 301 County Road 19, Excelsior. "Glocal" is an emphasis on the connection between global mission and local mission.

Presenters will speak about mission. Music from various cultures will enhance worship and meals will include food from around the globe. Registration is only \$35.

For information or to register, visit www.elca.org/globalevents or call 1-800-638-3522.

If you are willing to work at the event, please contact Mount Calvary Lutheran Church at 952-474-8893.

Comings & Goings

NEW TO THE SYNOD:

Rev. Dr. Matthew E. Bersagel, from Rocky Mountain Synod, to Crown of Glory Lutheran Church, Chaska, senior pastor.

Rev. Justin M. Dittrich, ordained February 26, 2011, to Nativity Lutheran Church, Saint Anthony, associate pastor.



Rev. Thomas O. Lee, from Southeastern Minnesota Synod, retired.

Rev. David A. Weeks, from Southwestern Minnesota Synod, to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Watertown, pastor.



WITHIN THE SYNOD:

Rev. Bruce Arnevik, to St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Bloomington, interim senior pastor.

Rev. Mark Bents, to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Brooklyn Park, interim senior pastor.

Rev. Kelly Lewis, from Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Minneapolis, to on leave from call.

Rev. Eva Jensen, from Lutheran Campus Ministry – Twin Cities, to on leave from call.

Rev. Scott Nocton, from Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fridley, to on leave from call.

Rev. Thomas Stutelberg, from St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Columbia Heights, to East Union Lutheran Church, Carver, pastor.

Rev. Mark E. Warpmacker, from Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, to Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry, Minneapolis, executive director.

GOINGS/RETIREMENTS with Godspeed:

Rev. Reggie Denton, from Elim Lutheran Church, Robbinsdale, to Northeastern Minnesota Synod.

Rev. Philip J. Formo, ordained June 1, 1980, retired March 1, 2011.

CONGREGATIONS IN INTERIM:

Alleluia!, St. Michael, pastor
Bethany, Minneapolis, pastor
Bethel Evangelical, Minneapolis, pastor
Cross of Glory, Brooklyn Center, pastor
Family of Christ, Chanhassen, senior
Gustavus Adolphus, Minneapolis, pastor

Hope Evangelical, Minneapolis, pastor
Jordan New Life, Minneapolis, pastor
Lord of Life, Ramsey, senior, associate
Siloa, Braham, pastor (PT)
St. John's Evangelical, Mound, senior
St. Luke's, Bloomington, senior

St. Timothy, Columbia Heights, pastor
Woodlake, Richfield, senior
Zion Evangelical Minneapolis, pastor

CONGREGATIONS IN ACTIVE CALL PROCESS:

All Saints, Minnetonka, senior
Faith, Isanti, pastor
Good Shepherd, Wayzata, associate
Mt. Carmel, Minneapolis, associate (PT)

Prince of Peace, Brooklyn Park, senior
Salem Evangelical, Minneapolis, pastor
St. Barnabas, Plymouth, associate
St. Mary Magdalene, Savage, pastor
St. Philip's, Fridley, senior
West Union, Carver, pastor

CONGREGATIONS CALLING FINAL CANDIDATE:

Zion, Buffalo, associate

IN MEMORY:

The Rev. Lloyd W. Franke died February 25, 2011, at the age of 89. Born December 3, 1921, in Arthur, N.D., he graduated from Carthage College, Carthage, Ill., in 1949; and from Northwestern Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, in 1952. He was ordained in 1952. He served congregations in Minot, N.D.; Muskego, Wis.; and Atonement Lutheran, Minneapolis; before retiring in 1985.

Preceded in death by his wife, Lucille, Rev. Franke is survived by daughters, Karla Nistler and husband, Robert, and Joanne Forrest and husband, John; son, Craig Franke and wife, Deb; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; brother, Merle Franke and wife, Ginna; sister, Myrna Turner and husband, Jim.

InterActs

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Deadline for submission of articles for the May issue is Monday, April 18.

April 2011

Walking the Talk of Welcome, April 2, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, 910 W County Road D, St. Paul. A half-day workshop for congregations wanting to welcome LGBT persons into worship and church life. Participants will discuss ways to create a welcoming atmosphere within their own congregations and strategize actions that illustrate that welcome. Watch the website (www.lc-tc.org) or contact ric.lctc@gmail.com for more information.

Faith and the Earth, April 3, 9:30 and 11 a.m., All Saint's Lutheran Church, 15915 Excelsior Blvd., Minnetonka. Come to this forum to discuss how you think Christians are called to serve as stewards of God's creation. Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy Executive Director Rev. Mark Peters and Youth Coordinator Nate Blumenshine will share why they feel called as Christians to encourage our political leaders to protect the environment. All are welcome.

Safeguarding God's Children, April 5, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., St. Stephen Lutheran Church, 8400 France Ave. S, Bloomington. Safeguarding God's Children is an in-depth educational and training program for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in everyday life and in ministry. The workshop will train participants to use the Safeguarding God's Children materials (available through the synod office) in their own training sessions. For more information and to register, go to the synod website, www.mpls-synod.org.

LACE Chapter Meeting, April 7, 10-11:30 a.m., Luther Seminary Campus Center Auxiliary Dining Room. Topic: "Image Is Everything: Exploring Female Faith Identity Through Religious Education" presented by Claire Bischoff. Claire will share a curriculum she designed to stimulate the exploration of healthy female faith identities with adolescent girls and discuss what she learned when she implemented it at an urban Lutheran church and at a suburban Catholic school. Open to all. For more information contact Diane E. Shallue, AiM at 612-331-5988 or dianes@ulch.org.

Native American Spirituality Seminar, April 8-9, Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, 3900 Winnetka Ave. N, New Hope. The theme of this seminar is "The Indigenous Mind . . . the Quantum Mind." Speakers are Basil and Charlotte Brave Heart. To register, email clem744@charter.net. Register by April 1.

Lutheran AIDS Network 2011 Biennial Conference, April 11-12, Central Lutheran Church, 333 S 12th St., Minneapolis. Visit the conference website at www.lutheranaids.net/conference 2011 for up-to-date information on registration categories, individual banquet tickets, scholarships and hotel reservations.

Worship Dialogue Gathering, April 12, 11:30 a.m., St. John's Lutheran Church, 4842 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis. Rev. Donald Luther, ELCA pastor, will speak on "Sighs Too Deep for Words – Pastoral Care." Bring bag lunch if desired. Phone 612-827-4406 for more information.

College of Retired Church Workers Luncheon, April 12, noon, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 4100 Lyndale Ave., Minneapolis. For retired clergy, associates in ministry, church workers and spouses of the Minneapolis Area and Saint Paul Area Synods. Cost is \$12, payable at the door. Reservations required by April 7. Contact Cyndi Berg at 651-224-4313.

Seminary of the Streets, April 14, 6-8 p.m., Our Saviour's Housing. This month's topic: "Homelessness" Text: Acts 3:1-10. For more information, see www.mpls-synod.org.

Faith & Life Lecture Series – Faith and Healing: Storytelling and Spiritual Health, April 15, 7:00 p.m., St. Philip the Deacon Lutheran Church, 17205 County Road 6, Plymouth. Kevin Kling is a well-known playwright and storyteller whose commentaries can be heard on NPR's "All Things Considered." Free and open to the public. Visit www.faith-and-life.org for more information, or call 763-475-7136 or e-mail info@faith-and-life.org.

Book of Faith Jubilee, April 29-May 1, Luther Seminary. Luther Seminary is partnering with the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative, Augsburg College and Augsburg Fortress to bring together lay leaders, teachers, pastors and church staff for a three-day conference. Keynote speakers: Nadia Bolz-Weber, Craig Koester, John Roberto, Jessicah Duckworth. Visit www.luthersem.edu/jubilee for more information, call 651-641-3416 or e-mail kairos@luthersem.edu.

Events highlighted by a colored box are sponsored by the Minneapolis Area Synod.

What's Happening, continued on page 8

Opportunities

Music and Worship

Interim Organist/Music Director
– St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church, St. Paul (PT).

Youth and Family Ministry

Youth Coordinator – Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Roseville (PT).

Minister of Faith Formation – Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Stillwater (PT/FT).

Education and Children's Ministry

Coordinator of Children's Ministry
– Incarnation Lutheran Church, Shoreview (PT).

Children and Family Minister Coordinator – Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Stillwater (PT).

Early Childhood and Family Ministry Coordinator – Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Stillwater (PT).

Children's Ministry Coordinator
– Atonement Lutheran Church, Bloomington (PT).

Director of Christian Education
– Our Saviour's Lutheran, Hastings (FT).

Administrative and Other Position

Assistant Product Manager, Children and Youth – Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis (FT)

Lead Preschool Teacher at St. Luke's Christian Preschool – St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Bloomington (PT).

Assistant Product Manager, Congregational – Augsburg Fortress/sparkhouse, Minneapolis (FT).

Custodian – Minnesota Council of Churches, Minneapolis (PT).

Finance Intern – Luther Seminary, St. Paul (FT summer 2011, paid).

Social Media and Marketing Intern
– Youth Encounter, Shoreview (PT).

Development Assistant – Youth Encounter, Shoreview (PT).

Accounting Clerk – Minnesota Council of Churches, Minneapolis (PT).

Credit and Collections Specialist – Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis (FT).

For more job opportunities, visit the synod website, www.mpls-synod.org.

April issue of *The Lutheran* Ponders Lent, Easter

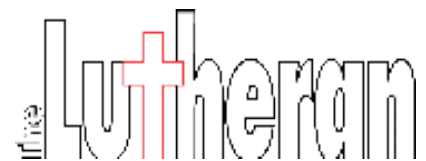
The April issue of *The Lutheran* moves readers from Lent, through Holy Week and into Easter. In "Making Lent count," learn how to make the season meaningful for children – and adults too. Go "Beyond the Resurrection" to see how an Indianapolis church adds a twist to the traditional Stations of the Cross. Where is the risen Jesus? Read the Easter reflection titled "Christ at the Crossroads" to find out.

This month we ask: "Who are the evangelicals?" Find out how Lutherans relate and respond to evangelicals. The section includes a study guide by Robert Blezard, an ELCA pastor in Pennsylvania, which is available in the print edition and at www.thelutheran.org (free to

print and Web subscribers; click on "study guides").

The Lutheran's April issue gives you some articles to think about and discuss. Read Peter Marty's column and ponder "The World of Sin." Think about Tom Erich's six suggestions for a course change at the congregational level. Would your congregation benefit from trying one or all of these serious challenges? Study "Blessings and Privileges" to see how correcting our semantics is a theological opportunity.

What's in it for you? Plenty! Discover how Lutheran agencies are helping older adults go high-tech at home; find out why one agency is keeping "The Lutheran brand of caring;" travel to California where a congregation's community garden



is reaping rewards; read reviews of musician Chris Tomlin's latest album, the movie *Of Gods and Men* and the children's book *Images of God for Young Children*; see how you can introduce bedtime prayers to your children, a healthy habit for body and soul; learn about the 2011 Churchwide Assembly theme "Freed in Christ to Serve;" get a jump start on planning for Pentecost; meet an ELCA member who addresses agricultural issues for California. Don't forget the "News" and "Higher education" columns, where you can find out what's happening in the church locally, nationally and globally.

Major Concern in Relation to Military Vets Is Suicide

by Amy Blumenshine, DM, Coming Home Collaborative

Many pastoral care providers will deal with someone suicidal in their work. Suicide is a major concern in relation to military veterans. As pastoral care providers improve their skills to offer suicide intervention to veterans and their families, they will find applications to their other parishioners as well. In Minnesota, the general age group with the highest rate of suicide is 50-64, a prime church-going demographic. Surviving Viet Nam veterans are of concern.

A national 24/7 suicide intervention hotline 1-800-273-TALK, connects to resources local to the caller. Reach online resources, such as a Veteran's Chat line through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's web page at <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans/Default.aspx>.

Gary Schoener, a licensed psychologist and the director of consultation and training at Walk-In Counseling Center, has recently published "The Suicidal Client/Parishioner: A Guide for Clergy, Pastoral Counselors and Psychologists Who Advise Them" for the *Minnesota Psychologist*. This is available as a free download at www.ListenToVets.org. The article also lists helpful resources, including a booklist for survivors.

Suicide, of course, is not a specific disorder but rather is typically a tragic end-point to a person's painful psychological process.

Schoener writes: "Many of those who attempt suicide but live will indicate that they were not trying to kill themselves but simply responding to overpowering emotional pain. They are trying to get rid of the pain – not necessarily to die. When treatment is successful many survivors do not repeat their attempts, reporting that the pain is no longer there."

Spiritual "tool kits" for getting through tough moments can be lifesavers. Some studies indicate that people with religious affiliations have a lower history of suicide attempts. Hope and the feeling of support are also important in coping.

Schoener notes that pastoral care providers can support and assist the parishioner in obtaining the assistance of mental health professionals. This may include involving family or friends as support persons, or at times others in the congregation. If the parishioner is in crisis the assistance of local crisis services is important. Thoughts of ending one's life sometimes arise for those dealing with issues of chronic pain or illness.

The evaluation of urgency is a major judgment call for any intervener. Schoener notes that the suicide intervention field has shifted away from evaluating a list of suicide risk



factors to focusing on suicide warning signs which are specific to a given situation, such as:

- Rage and reckless behavior
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feeling trapped
- Anxiety and/or agitation
- Dramatic mood changes
- Emotional and social withdrawal
- Lack of a sense of purpose in life – "no reason to live"

Suicide preventers are also concerned about the lethal possibilities of intentional self-harm and high risk behaviors, and the complications of sleep deprivation and substances, prescribed and unprescribed, on decision-making. Researchers are currently investigating the role that moral injury plays in suicide.

Additional information specific to intervention with veterans is at www.mpls-synod.org/files/programs/vets/vets_interacts/2008_jul.pdf and www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/04/17/fyi/main4024724.shtml?source=search_story.

Schoener's organization, Walk-In Counseling Center, provides professional counseling at 2421 Chicago Ave. S, Minneapolis, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m.; and on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. No appointment or fee is required, although donations are requested. Services are strictly confidential, and clients may remain anonymous. Walk-In Counseling Center also has clinics in the east metro area. See www.walkin.org/counseling/client-information for locations and hours.

May 2011

LACE Chapter Meeting, May 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m., University Lutheran Church of Hope, 601 13th Ave. SE, Minneapolis. Topic: "Faith Formation 2020" presented by John Roberto, president of Lifelong Faith Associates. What will Christian faith formation in churches look like in 2020? The new environment in which Christian faith formation will operate in the decade from 2010-2020 will demand new thinking and new models, practices, resources and technologies to address the spiritual needs of all generations. For this event only, LACE members free, non-LACE members \$10 at the door. For more information contact Diane E. Shallue, AiM at 612-331-5988 or dianes@ulch.org.

2011 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly, May 6-7, St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie. See article on page 1 for more information.

Systems Theory Applied to Your Systems Workshop, May 10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Luther Seminary, St. Paul. This workshop is an opportunity for congregation staff and leaders to come together and look at issues from a systems perspective. The cost is designed for a group: \$50 for one participant from a congregation or \$100 for up to five from a congregation. The leader is Rev. Dr. John Martin Mann; he has studied Family System Theory with Rabbi Edwin Friedman, Larry Foster and Peter Steinke. To sign up or if you have questions, contact Roger Schwarze at 651-777-5102 or rschwarze@qwest.net.

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness Luncheon, May 12, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Location TBD. Topic: "Mental Health Recovery: A Journey not a Destination." Guest speakers

are from the Consumer Survivor Network and Mental Health Association of Minnesota. Lunch: \$5 per person (if this is a hardship, please state that with your RSVP). RSVP to Andrea at 612-767-2209 or andreab@mtolivet.org.

Worship Dialogue Gathering, May 17, 11:30 a.m., St. John's Lutheran Church, 4842 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis. Dr. Kristin Anderson, associate professor of art history, Augsburg College, will speak on "The Spirit in the Church's Art." Bring bag lunch if desired. For more information phone 612-827-4406.

Social Phonics Boot Camp for Pastors, Ministry and Non-Profit Leaders, May 19, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 1701 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington. Learn how to best use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, a podcast, and a blog for your ministry. And, most importantly, develop a philosophy of social media engagement that will fit in your own mission. Cost: \$125. For more information and to register, go to the synod website, www.mpls-synod.org.

Crossways International's Living Word Workshop, May 31-June 2, Luther Seminary, St. Paul. The seminar uses the highly acclaimed courses and visual teaching graphics developed by Rev. Dr. Harry Wendt, founder of Crossways International. For clergy, seminarians and lay ministers. Cost: \$225 + materials. Discount rates available for groups, repeaters, etc. CEUs available. For more information, or to register, call 800-257-7308 or 952-832-5454. Visit www.crossways.org for more information.

June 2011

Generous Hearts: Encouraging Planned Giving Ministry in the Congregation, June 3, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis.

ELCA Glocal Mission Gathering, June 10-11, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 301 County Road 19, Excelsior. Music from various cultures will enhance worship and meals will include food from around the globe. Registration for this event will be available starting in March. For information or to register, visit www.elca.org/globalevents or call 1-800-638-3522.

ELCA Day at Valleyfair, June 20, Valleyfair, Shakopee. More information to come. Contact Mary Kaye at 612-532-7083.

July 2011

Faith and Family Night at a Lynx Game, July 29, 7 p.m., Target Center, Minneapolis. Join the Minnesota Lynx for the 2011 Faith and Family Night event in partnership with Thrivent Financial. Bring your youth group, sports team, family and friends for a night of WNBA basketball, music, and worship. The Lynx will be playing the Seattle Storm.

August 2011

2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, August 14-20, Orlando, Florida. The 12th Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be held at the Orlando World Center Resort. Voting members will gather for legislative action, Bible study and daily worship rooted in the Word and Sacraments.

Town Hall Forum with ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, August 18, online (during 2011 Churchwide Assembly). More information is at www.elca.org.

Nigeria Companion Congregations Consider Occasional Retreat

Bridgebuilder Training, August 29-31, Luther Seminary, St. Paul. Bridgebuilder is a resource of trained lay and clergy who assist congregations in reconciliation and healing. The six-step process includes interviews with congregation leaders and other members, interviews with staff, gathering of information and preparations for a follow-up plan. Cost: \$475 (includes the Training Manual, the Leader's Packet, and one year's consultation following the training, plus coffee breaks). Meals may be purchased at the seminary cafeteria. Limited rooms available overnight in Stub Hall. Contact the seminary for room information. Phone: 651-641-3456. For more information and registration form contact Pastor Roger Schwarze, 651-777-5102 or rschwarze@qwest.net.

September 2011

Bishops' Theological Conference, September 25-27, Heartwood Conference Center and Retreat, Trego, Wisconsin. See article on page 3 for more information.

Nearly 40 adults attended an event at Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church on March 7 to receive updated information about the synod companion partnership with the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN). The gathering was designed for those already involved in a companion relationship with a congregation or organization in Nigeria, or those interested in such a relationship. It also provided an opportunity to network in order to strengthen and enhance new and existing congregational partnerships in Nigeria. Many of those attending expressed the desire and need for annual or bi-annual events of this kind.

Over the past six years, over 70 people have traveled to Nigeria to visit LCCN companion partners, and others have traveled there to continue and further the work of synod water and medical teams. Travelers return from these life-changing trips transformed as they witnessed the amazing evangelism efforts of the LCCN.

Gathering on a regular basis will help companion congregations stay connected to their partners in a meaningful way. It also will be a time to share information. The Global Companion Table is considering an overnight retreat that will gather friends from Minneapolis Area Synod partner congregations for two days to celebrate ministry with the LCCN, share joys and challenges, receive updates on what is going on both in Nigeria and the Minneapolis Area Synod, discern where priorities for extended ministry might lie within the LCCN, worship together, and have time for fellowship with those who share this global mission passion.

If your congregation is interested in participating in this kind of retreat, please contact companion synod coordinator, Kris Perry, at k.perry@mpls-synod.org. Once congregations have indicated their interest, the Global Companion Table will identify a date and place.

Celebrate Global Relationships

Pentecost Sunday is coming – a perfect time to celebrate the global relationships in which your congregation is involved.

- Invite a pastor or seminary student from the nation in which your companion congregation is located to preach, lector or lead the Prayers of the Church.
- Be sure to include the synod companion churches, Leipzig District and Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, as well as your specific companion in the Prayers of the Church.
- Invite a choir or soloist who performs music from the country in which your companion congregation is located.
- Sing global music that Sunday.
- Take a special offering on Pentecost Sunday for a specific purpose (e.g., for the seminary that serves your companion's church).
- Learn together how to share the peace in the language of your companion. At the time of the peace, greet one another in those words.

Congregations Share Our Malaria Work Activities – and They Are Fun!

Minneapolis Area Synod congregations are having great fun and enormous success working together in support of *Our Malaria Work – A Global Community Gathered by Christ: From Stranger to Neighbor*. Here are a few highlights of their work and some great ideas that YOU can try in your own congregation. Join in the fun and success of *Our Malaria Work*!

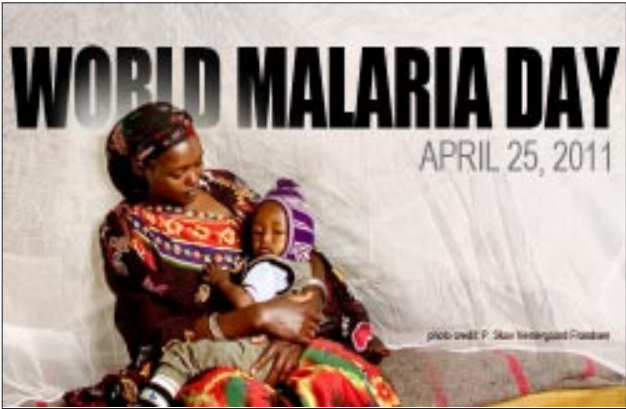
Mount Carmel Lutheran Church is promoting “**Coins Against Malaria.**” During children’s time in worship, children noisily dump coins into a red metal bucket. They have already collected enough for more than nine mosquito nets, and they continue to encourage noisy coin offerings to assist the ELCA Malaria Campaign in its life-saving mission. During 2011, Mount Carmel has an “audacious goal” of collecting the equivalent of 100 nets, which is also the amount that could sponsor a traveling music and drama malaria education group!

Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Hopkins, is selling **Mother’s Day net corsages** to raise awareness of malaria’s devastation and to generate funds for *Our Malaria Work*. *La Amistad* sewing group, a part of their Latino outreach ministry that brings together the Anglo and Latino communities for mutual learning opportunities, is making the net corsages. Information about the corsages is available at www.elca.org/malaria (click on “Resources” on the left, and scroll down to “Fundraising” at the bottom of the page).

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Minneapolis held a **baked goods silent auction** that included a wide array of scrumptious treats. This pre-Christmas activity was a great way to highlight the baking talents, specialties and traditions of congregational members and to bring some delicious holiday treats to many households. Could your congregation sell some goodies for Easter or Mother’s Day and raise funds to prevent malaria?

Oak Grove Lutheran Church’s children are making **pipe cleaner mosquitoes** to “sell” for donations to *Our Malaria Work*. Directions for these inexpensive and simple mosquitoes are at http://www.igrc.org/console/files/oForms_YJ7JB6/How_To_-_Pipe_Cleaner_Mosquito_UVAVU44F.pdf. This is an excellent way to provide a lasting reminder of the daily threat of malaria-carrying mosquitoes faced by our neighbors in Africa.

Edina Community Lutheran Church developed **resources for children**, which they are sharing. The first resource, revised by Brenda Froisland, is a child-friendly version of Malaria Jeopardy, found at www.elca.org/malaria (click on “Resources,” and scroll down to “Youth Activities”). Diann Crane offers the Buzz Players’ “Reverse Sermon,”



World Malaria Day, April 25

Malaria is preventable and treatable, yet far too many still die from this disease. Every 45 seconds, a child dies from malaria. Today, we are in a special moment when we can turn this around. Already, the rate of death from malaria among children has been reduced by a third. And now you are invited to join with the ELCA in working to eliminate deaths from malaria – for good. The ELCA Malaria Campaign will help our companion churches in Africa provide mosquito nets, insecticides, medication, mosquito control and comprehensive health education – methods proven to be highly effective in fighting malaria.

Since World Malaria Day falls on Easter Monday, please join the international community by observing World Malaria Day during your worship services on Sunday, May 1.

found at www.mpls-synod.org/programs/malaria (scroll down to “Resources,” and click on “Five Children’s Sermons and Pictures”).

For further information and resources or to schedule temple talks, children’s sermons, sermons, forum presentations, etc., please go to the *Our Malaria Work* website at www.mpls-synod.org/programs/malaria or contact Mary Simonson Clark at marysimonsonclark@gmail.com, 612-636-5104, or 952-933-8836.

Together, we can save lives and have fun!

Our Malaria Work, continued from page 2

Accompaniment efforts to contain malaria focus on plans developed with communities and countries in Africa including what local experts determine will work best in their contexts. These plans contain requests for resources that our neighbors most need to prevent and treat malaria. *Our Malaria Work* contributions also fund capacity building, which strengthens the local organizations to sustain malaria containment programs and access resources from other organizations, such as The Global Fund. All efforts include the essential component of education about malaria. For examples of the programs *Our Malaria Work* could fund, see the country fact sheets at www.elca.org/malaria/handbook and place your cursor on the countries at www.lwr.org/malaria.

Another specific example of a malaria program involves the Minneapolis Area Synod's companion synod, the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN). On March 22, our synod received news from Jessica Nipp, diaconal minister and associate in the ELCA Malaria Campaign in mission advancement, that LCCN will be the recipient of some of the malaria contributions. Nipp wrote:

The ELCA Malaria Campaign will be funding the LCCN Medical Department Ministry Department in a joint effort with Global Health Ministries. The project will encompass primary health care with a malaria focus. This year, a malaria coordinator will be hired [in Nigeria] to perform baseline assessments and plan a comprehensive malaria health program, which will begin to be implemented next year.

The Rev. James W. Gonia, ELCA Global Mission program director for West Africa, Tanzania and Madagascar, emphasizes the essential, central work for 2011 will be on building capacity and setting strong foundations, including training, for the overall health care delivery systems of the LCCN. Then, upon these foundations, the malaria-specific programming can be created, built and sustained.

Working through accompaniment insures our contributions support these types of effective malaria containment programs that provide prevention and treatment resources needed most by our neighbors in Africa.

The self-determination or opportunity for choice that is fundamental to accompaniment is also available to our congregations who participate in *Our Malaria Work* (see



ELCA Malaria Campaign
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

www.mpls-synod.org/programs/malaria). The synod is committed to accompany congregations with the activities that work best in their contexts and for the work they wish to support. Congregations can designate their giving to the ELCA Malaria Campaign (see www.elca.org/malaria) or the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (see www.lwr.org/malaria/), which is the collaboration between LWR and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod that also includes Lutheran Nothing But Nets. As of March 25, 2011, at least 79, or half, of the 155 Minneapolis Area Synod congregations were involved in *Our Malaria Work*. Their combined contributions for *Our Malaria Work* are in excess of \$49,300.

The ELCA Malaria Campaign and Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) share the approaches of *joining in praying, learning, giving, and telling* or advocating. These approaches work toward the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal #6, Target 6c, which is to halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria (see www.un.org/millenniumgoals/aids.shtml). Both the ELCA and LMI do this malaria work through accompaniment within relationships, developed and nurtured over time, between Lutherans in the United States and our neighbors in Africa.

These relationships, fostered through accompaniment and offering the gift of choice, insure good stewardship of our investments for effective malaria containment. We can fully understand these relationships based on our own experiences with God, who lovingly accompanies us and offers us the gift of choice. Therefore, as we lovingly accompany our neighbors, we offer our neighbors that same cherished gift of choice. Accompaniment – it's how we insure that we get the biggest bang for our malaria containment bucks **and** show our neighbors that we love them as ourselves.



Nets which keep out malaria-bearing mosquitos can be made available to our companions in Nigeria.

ELCA Board of Pensions Prepares to Open Redesigned Annuity

The Board of Pensions of the ELCA plans to reopen its Participating Annuity Fund for new entrants this year, said John G. Kapanke, president of the ELCA Board of Pensions. The Board of Pension's Participating Annuity and Bridge Fund was closed to new entrants in 2009 because of the sharp decline in global financial markets. Kapanke said the bridge component of the fund will not be reopened when the Participating Annuity Fund is reopened.

The "funded ratio" – assets divided by the benefit obligation – for the Participating Annuity and Bridge Fund has significantly improved, Kapanke reported. "This improvement lowered the Fund's funding gap to about \$46 million (in February 2011), down from a funding gap of nearly \$1 billion in March 2009. . . . This improvement has come from strong market performance and the annuity adjustments we have implemented for 2010 and 2011."



John Kapanke, president of the ELCA Board of Pensions, announced he would retire at the end of September 2011.

The trustees reduced 2010 payments for about 12,500 members in the Participating Annuity and Bridge Fund by nine percent. For 2011, the trustees approved a smaller-than-anticipated additional reduction of six percent.

In addition to the reopening of the Participating Annuity Fund, a second phase of the annuity project will involve "a review of the design objectives of a new internal annuity fund option."

The Board of Pensions hopes to implement an additional annuity fund option in 2012, Kapanke reported.

The trustees heard an update about a one-time payment opportunity for members most adversely affected by the reductions in annuity payments. In November 2010 the ELCA Church Council authorized the one-time payments from the ELCA Special Needs Retirement Fund. Up to \$1.4 million in payments were authorized. Applications for the one-time payments were to have been sent to the Board of Pensions and postmarked by February 28.

A total of 491 applications for the one-time payments were sent in, said the Rev. Robert D. Berg, Board of Pensions assistant to the president for church relations. Of that, 344 were eligible, 129 were not and 18 returned



the applications but acknowledged they were not eligible, he said. Many of the 18 thanked the board for making one-time payments

available to those who met the criteria, Berg said. Those not eligible for payments are being informed by phone call and letter. Eligible members will be sent a letter after the payment amount has been determined, Berg said, adding it is too early to give an estimate of the one-time payments.

The trustees also learned of other Board of Pensions initiatives:

- A new, dedicated team has been put in place to implement an overhaul of the Board of Pensions' online systems and technology aimed at streamlining customer service. Led by Ross Eichelberger, the team plans to implement the project in sections over the next 12 to 18 months.
- Through February, 5,638 members and spouses – 33 percent of those eligible – have taken an online health assessment, offered in partnership with the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn. In addition to the Board of Pensions, the ELCA's Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C., and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., have reached the 65 percent participation level, making them eligible for discounted rates. Individuals also earn personal wellness credits to use for reimbursing eligible out-of-pocket health care expenses.

A portion of the trustees meeting was held with two other boards for ELCA service ministries, the ELCA Foundation and the ELCA Mission Investment Fund. Leaders of the three organizations meet regularly to discuss collaborative opportunities.

Time Scales

by Vince Jacobson, congregational president of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Minnetonka

We have recently celebrated Christmas and now Easter is upon us. How often do you think about the illusion that it is only three or four months between Jesus' birth and Jesus' death on the cross? Yeah, I know, they did not actually happen in the same year, but after a lifetime of observing both of them each year, it is tempting to succumb to that illusion.

Our time scales are changing. Even the framework we use for measuring time is changing. Frameworks exist that express time in units ranging from unimaginably long to unimaginably short.



- Evolution progresses at a rate measured in terms of millions of years.
- In places such as China, political leadership is continuous for hundreds of years and they work toward 500-year plans.
- In America, a substantial fraction of our political leadership changes every other year and long-term plans are valued less than short-term gains. Indeed, a plan with a time scale of twice the history of the nation is beyond imagination.
- Time in culture and in Scripture is often measured in terms of generations.
- Time in computing is typically expressed in milliseconds or nanoseconds

In order to observe the events of 33 years over a 1/3 year interval, time would have to progress at a rate accelerated by 100 times. Think of some relevant time measures.

- Travel – In Jesus' time, most ground travel was by foot or by donkey. Compared to that, travel by automobile is perhaps 50 times accelerated, and air travel is well over 400 times accelerated.
- Communications – Of course, face-to-face communications is always at the same speed, but distant communications in Jesus' time could take days or weeks per exchange. Distant communication today, ranging from telephone to texting to email could be as much as a million times accelerated.

Perhaps we actually could relate to Jesus' entire life lived in a 1/3-year time frame. Wow! Are we an advanced civilization or what? The instant feedback that we are accustomed to today actually correlates very well with a hundredfold acceleration of the feedback we would have observed in Jesus' time. This almost makes our distorted vantage point seem as if it is not distorted at all.

So, are we an advanced civilization? The votes are in and the answer is definitely "or what." We are not advanced, we are just accelerated, and the far majority of that acceleration has occurred in the past 100 years. We are a species that evolves on a time scale of millions of years trying to adapt to an environment that is changing on a time scale of tens of years or less. It's no wonder that we sometimes get disoriented.

The fallacy of thinking we can live our lives at an accelerated rate is that some things simply cannot be accelerated. Do you think that the Israelites spent two generations in the desert just because they didn't have a GPS? Their destination was not a place on earth that could be reached more quickly by a more efficient route. Their destination was a place in the Kingdom, a change in the very essence of who they were as a people, so radical that it could be achieved only by being set apart for longer than a generation.

In the same way, Christianity is about being set apart by Christ transforming each of us as a person. Unlike most things that can be accelerated by technology, this kind of personal change still requires a full measure of time. The focus on being set apart during Lent is a small sample of what the Israelites experienced in the desert.

Today, more than ever, Christ's people need to intentionally invest in learning, experiencing, and practicing who we are set apart to be. Everything around us is conspiring to tell us that less time is needed, but that is clearly not true. The good news is that multitasking does work. We are not intended to set ourselves apart for designated periods to be "100 percent spiritual" during special circumstances such as Lent. We are intended to be set apart and live by Christ's example as we go about every aspect of our daily life.

Praise the Lord for the gift of time and for the example of how to live out our lives set apart.

Lutheran Campus Ministry Students Journey to New York City

by Rev. Kate Rauer, Lutheran Campus Minister, University of Minnesota

Just over two weeks ago, I sat with 16 ELCA Lutheran students and nine Muslims at Park 51 – the much talked about Victory Mosque at Ground Zero. It is, in reality, a gutted Burlington Coat Factory store and a dream. The dream is for something similar to a YWCA or a Jewish Community Center – a place for the community of Tribeca, open to all. As we sat listening to the team of two workers tell us about the place (it was so sparse there was no tour to be had) and the dreams they had for it, it got close to 7:00 and we had to break for prayer. A couple of New York City police officers came in to pray, as did a man in a suit, a woman with her iPod, and a slow trickle of others. We divided into men and women, and the Christians moved to the back of the space, listened in silence to the call to prayer, and watched and waited for prayers to be done.

Afterwards, a Muslim chaperone came over to the Lutheran students and asked, “Do you have any questions about what just happened?” The hands shot up one after another in a series of rapid fire questions about prayer, the roles of men and women in Islam, the politics of this place.

And this was just the beginning of our trip. We continued to serve, as well as laugh and cry together as we visited Ground Zero, the United Nations, Ellis Island; as we talked about our families and our faith and the ladies’ shared obsession with Daniel Radcliffe. Friendships were formed around shared values, similarities were discovered, lives were changed, plans were made for continuing this work on campus and inviting our friends and families and worship communities into similar endeavors.

Because of the size of the group and our long days, I rarely had time to check in with the students and ask the quintessential Lutheran question “What does this mean?” And so, upon our return, I started doing small group debriefs, wondering with the students what this means for



Lutheran Campus Ministry students and Muslim students shared conversations about their experiences and their dreams.

their life, for the life of this church and for the life of the world.

Through this, I learned about the ways their home communities, mostly in the rural Midwest were receiving this. People had questions, but they were engaging. Little churches were writing out support checks. The *International Falls Journal* did a cover story on the trip (and their hometown girl). In a nation and a church that is so full of division, people are longing for signs of reconciliation and hope. People are longing to be a part of something that makes for life.

But in addition to this, I noticed something startling.

Though they broke down stereotypes and noticed a lot of similarities between traditions, both Muslim and Christian students were increasingly curious about their own faith. Our Lutheran Campus Ministry students emerged from this

Lutheran Campus Ministry, continued on page 16

A Yearning for Social Justice

by Ed Payne, Minneapolis Area Synod Hunger Committee chair

What can beat an evening with a group of teens at a T-Wolves game followed by a weekend retreat with them on an island in northern Minnesota? Nothing – unless the youth are all eager to learn about the Bible’s “justice” side of hunger and poverty and ready to act on their newfound learnings about advocacy!

This was the case after the synod’s World Hunger Committee met with youth directors from some of the synod’s congregations, and they put together a retreat for February 25-27 at Bay Lake Camp near Deer River, Minnesota. Each youth director chose just a few youth who had already exhibited a yearning for social justice. The weekend included lots of statistics, stories and simulations to keep the youth constantly involved and explained how relief, development and advocacy each play a part in solving hunger. Chris Carpenter, the acting director of the ELCA Hunger Program, showed how the ELCA works in these areas. The youth then brainstormed ideas on what they could do, and they made plans to implement these plans at their congregations. Everyone wrote letters to Congress on foreign aid reform and some made plans to do state advocacy.

And what was the consensus from those who were involved? Let’s do it again! The youth will have a couple of evening follow-up meetings in the next few months to check on their progress. The event was partially funded by a grant from the ELCA Hunger Program and is a potential model for other synods to use.



RETREAT BLOG

by Ross Stager, Immanuel Lutheran, Eden Prairie

(Quotes from his blog based on his experience and ponderings during/after the retreat.)

Ultimately, justice is not found in abstract words and theories. Justice is found in concrete reality, measurable terms. Justice is eliminating hunger, poverty and loneliness. Justice may mean the accumulation of abstract thoughts, but what it is, is ultimately left up to us to enact it and bring it into existence. Without judicious action in this world, we cannot claim that it exists.

Action is not far along in the future, for large governments or institutions. Action is for us, the individuals, curbing resource use, behaving like everyone we meet is family and realizing that everyone in the world is our collective brother and sister in Christ

We talk a lot about anger. Anger propels us out of apathy, and it wakes us up. We channel anger into productivity, but our action does not originate with anger. The primary reason we feel anger in the first place is because of love. It is not hatred and anger for those who benefit from the status quo, but love for the downtrodden, the ones who experience systemic impediments to solidarity. That is the seed planted in us by our Creator which flourishes into the luscious flora seen in our gathering.

It is this righteous anger, this holy indignation, rooted in love for others, which propels action, thus creating justice. If justice does not exist, if it is not brought down from the visage of abstract language into reality, then it does not exist without our action. To act is to be just, and to seek justice is to compel one to act.

What Is Unconditional Love?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:43-45).



Dietrich Bonhoeffer believed “it is love that shows no special favor to those who love us in return.” If we love our brothers and sisters, our nation, our relatives and our friends, that is showing ordinary love for the tribe; but Jesus told us God’s love (the law brought to its final point) is love for especially our enemy. We do not need Jesus to teach us how to love those who love us back. That is normal human stuff. Instead, we need the Christ to overcome ourselves, to help us to love those who are

against us or those who do not share our values or socio-economic strata.

You see we cannot do the law to its final point of “you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul, and your neighbor as yourself.” This, it seems, is impossible for me even for a moment, but during this Lent and Easter, Christ tells the story of one who used perfect obedience, who has overcome the death dance of this world and has brought us along beside him as heirs and children of God. That is Christ’s journey of Lent, and that is our good news. For we are the unrighteous who have been declared righteous. Blessed Lent and Easter!

On another topic: I want to let you know that Mr. Michael Bash, who has done a lot of the legal work for our synod office, has offered to write a regular column in this newsletter to help pastors and lay leaders be more informed as to what is important as you look at your congregational needs concerning property, finances, human resources and other issues. I believe this kind of information may be helpful in pointing to appropriate policies for our congregations. We will start this series next month. Let us know if it is helpful.

Bishop Craig Johnson

Lutheran Campus Ministry, continued from page 14

trip proud of, and with a deeper understanding of, their own Lutheran Christian identity. As one student defended her decision to go on this trip to her mostly theologically conservative friends, she “came home” to her ELCA roots as she was reminded of the freedom she found in Christ. One student fell in love again with our corporate worship and prayer saying, “It’s just different when it’s everyone all together.” Another is contemplating seminary for the first time.

We underestimate our young adults. They are curious, compassionate, thoughtful, deeply committed human beings who not only will be, but in some cases already are, leading our church and our world. We must not be afraid to go deep with them, allowing room for questions and doubting, nurturing them through Word and Sacrament, challenging them and giving them significant leadership opportunities. This is how we can go wide – bringing Christ to the world (and the dorm rooms) and being curious about all that God might be up to in our lives, in our communities and in this world God loves so much.

There is, indeed, a fountain flowing deep and wide.

Lutheran Campus Ministry is one of the **L**co-ministries that receives financial support from both the churchwide organization and the Minneapolis Area Synod through the offerings that congregations share through mission support. It is your generous giving that makes this vital ELCA ministry to college students possible. Thank you.

Pastor Kate Reuer, U of M Twin Cities Lutheran campus pastor, is actively seeking individual and congregational partners for campus ministry. If you or your congregation have a passion for campus ministry and would like to explore a partnership, please call Kate Reuer at 612-605-8010 or contact Terri Endres, director of stewardship and development for the Minneapolis Area Synod, at 612-870-3610.