

Companions from Leipzig visit synod & affirm covenant

Who were those Germans singing at Maynard's restaurant in Excelsior, Minn., the other day? Ah, yes, The Leipzig Connection.

The connection is part of the Minneapolis Area Synod's participation in the ELCA Companion Synod program. Its roots go back to the 1980s. A 2006 covenant between the Leipzig District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony and the Minneapolis Area Synod was just extended for another five years on Sunday, Oct. 23.

Since 1998 more than 22 contacts have taken place either in Leipzig or in Minneapolis.

In this most recent visit, Oct. 14-24, 18 church musicians, pastors and a parish educator from Leipzig came here for 10 days. Gathering

under the theme of "Culture, Worship and the Gospel," they spent several days with colleagues in seven of our congregations. They also gathered with pastors; with faculty from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and Augsburg College, Minneapolis; and with others to discuss our cultural context and our response in ministry and worship.

Another description of the Leipzig Connection comes from some statements made during this visit:

- "The building blocks of community are found in trusting that a person's Christian discipleship that is different from mine can still be faithful"—Leipzig Superintendent Martin Henker, Luther Seminary chapel sermon, Oct. 20.
- "In John 15, Jesus calls the dis-

ciples friends. This week we have all become friends, and we are all friends of Jesus"—Torsten Heinrich, Leipzig District youth pastor, at the farewell service Oct. 23.

• "All eyes wait upon you, O Lord. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing ..."—from a table grace. This is what those Germans were singing in four-part harmony at Maynard's on Oct. 21 (yes, with other patrons sitting all around them).

Plans are under way for the next events. In 2013 the Leipzig Connection will find groups of youth and youth pastors, musicians and congregational pastors, and delegations from Lutheran social service agencies traveling one direction or the other. □



Guests from Leipzig visited the synod office: Torsten Heinrich (left), district youth pastor; Frank Schmidt, associate to the superintendent; Bishop Glenn Nycklemoe; and Martin Henker, superintendent of the Leipzig District.

Choosing a bishop

Electing a bishop is one of the most important decisions made by synod assemblies. For a pastor, it is a call of great responsibility that involves partnerships with people in the synod, with others across the ELCA and with ecumenical partners around the world.

An open process for the election of a bishop serves the synod well. The desire for open discussion grows out of a sense of responsibility, not out of dissatisfaction with past leadership. When conversations about hopes, dreams, priorities, challenges and possibilities occur in preparation for an election, synod members feel they have a great stake in the synod's ministry and a stronger sense of partnership with the bishop's office.

The questions to consider as the synod prepares to elect a new bishop are:

- What are the synod's priorities for ministry?
- What are our greatest challenges, opportunities, resources, liabilities?
- Where do we want to be in the next three to six years?
- What priorities and emphases do we have for leadership?
- What qualities, experiences, styles and skills would best serve us?

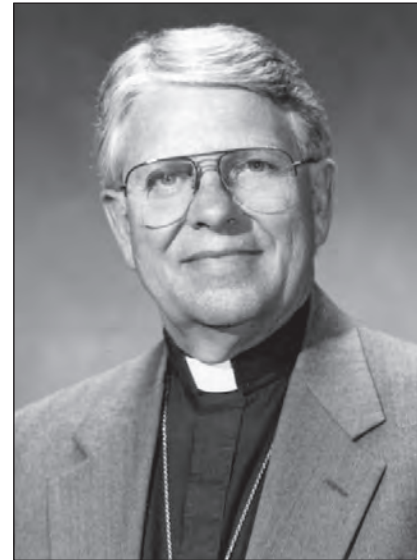
In listing expectations for leadership, leave room for the uniqueness of each nominee. Consider not only the position to be filled, but also ask what this woman or man bring to the work of the office that would be challenging and appropriate to the synod.

I believe our process for the election of a new bishop will serve us well.



Synod Senior Band finishes 6th year

On Oct. 25, the Synod Senior Band closed out its sixth season with its annual Coffee Concert at Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park, Minn. The band was founded in 2005 by director Em Stark as a ministry to and for senior citizens. Presently, the band has more than 80 members and performs 10 concerts a year. The group has already filled up its 2012 calendar and is working on scheduling concerts for 2013.



Glenn Nycklemoe

The Bishop's Election Committee is guiding the process with deep concern for the well being of our synod. Our process, I am sure, will surface names of people with varying skills and experience, each of whom could serve well as bishop.

I encourage you to pray and to be in conversation as the call process proceeds to the election in February. Pray for the guidance of the Spirit. Some people are more comfortable seeking individual counsel, some discern the Spirit's guidance in conversation with others.

The election of a bishop this year marks the beginning of a new partnership in ministry. In the time ahead, uphold our synod in prayer, be diligent in faithful and creative service to God's people and God's world, and work together in honesty and trust.

Glenn Nycklemoe, interim bishop

Minneapolis Area



2012 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly
Rooted in the Biblical Story

2012 synod assembly:

'Rooted in the Biblical Story'

This year the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly theme will be "Rooted in the Biblical Story." As one church together, we welcome and encourage your presence as an important part of our 2012 assembly.

Please consider this a personal invitation to worship, learn and engage in biblical study, as well as to participate in business decisions and the bishop election, along with your fellow rostered leaders and congregational elected lay voting members.

Registration

You can register by going to our website (www.mpls-synod.org).

The early registration fee (before Jan. 5, 2012) for the assembly will be \$120 per voting member. Late registration will be \$145. Visitors

can choose to attend one or both days; the cost is \$45 for one day, or \$90 for both.

Speakers

We have a great list of speakers this year. Our churchwide representative will be ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

Our keynote speaker is the Rev. Susan Briehl. She has served as director of Holden Village, a retreat center near Chelan, Wash.; campus pastor of Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash.; and pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Bellingham, Wash.

Currently she is a member of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, called to her work with the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of



Mark S. Hanson

People of Faith. She serves as the Distinguished Professor of the Art of Ministry at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.



Susan Briehl

We are happy to have Diane Jacobson join us as our Bible study leader. Jacobson came to Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., as an assistant professor in 1982 and was promoted to associate professor in 1990. In 1999, she became professor of Old Testament.



Diane Jacobson

She was chair of the biblical division from 1993 to 1996. She served as associate dean of MA/MSM programs from 1997 to 2006. She currently serves as director of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative. □

Important assembly dates

- Early-bird registration ends: Jan. 5, midnight.
- Exhibits/displays registration deadline: Jan. 5, midnight.
- Last day for refunds: Feb. 3.
- Registration closes: Feb. 10, midnight.
- Opening worship/opening of assembly: Feb. 17, 8 a.m.



Seminary of the Streets

Sessions offer provocative topics

If you haven't experienced Seminary of the Streets yet, here are two upcoming sessions that are sure to peak your interest. All are welcome. Sign up at www.mpls-synod.org.

January session

Poverty Simulation—“Face the Facts: Understanding the Working Poor”

Jan. 12, 6-8 p.m. (meal at 5:15 p.m.), Minneapolis Council of Churches, Division for Indian Work, 1001 E. Lake St.

This evening will be a condensed version of a retreat featuring an interactive exercise about the survival choices homeless and working-poor families must make each month. Pay the heating bill or feed the kids? Forgo health insurance to pay the rent and pray no one gets sick?

Participants learn what roles self-worth, chemical dependency, racism, the economy and domestic violence play in poverty and what is being done to break the cycle. They are then challenged to reflect on what we, as people of faith, can do.

February session

“Innovative Leadership Using

Asset-Based Community Development”

Feb. 9, 6-8 p.m. (meal at 5:15 p.m.), location to be determined.

Jody Kretzmann, co-founder and director of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute, will lead a discussion about how communities, congregations and organizations select certain groups of people to marginalize, often with the best of intentions. How does help hurt? How can service be enslaving? And what can we do to keep the unintended consequences of our good will from overwhelming its recipients? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the recognition that gifts, talents, skills and dreams are universal, and that the key to inclusion lies in this recognition.

What is Seminary of the Streets?

A connecting point for members of urban and suburban Lutheran churches in the Twin Cities—going from stranger to neighbor.

It is discussion and experiential learning so we can wonder together: “How does this topic translate to my context?”

It is a new GPS, reorienting us to what God is up to in our lives and

through the communities of which we are a part.

This is a joint venture between the Minneapolis Area Synod, Faith in the City, and people in the pews to create awareness and provide a series of educational, service and relational opportunities for members of Minneapolis Area and Saint Paul Area synod congregations.

Seminary of the Streets will be “college-like” with learning in the classroom, a curriculum, homework and service opportunities. Attending the sessions will help you discover what your gifts are.

The faculty will be leaders in our synod, and the classrooms will be in the congregations where we worship.

Read more on our blog

One week prior to each session we'll have guest blog posts by one of the speakers. The week following we'll spark conversation with reflections of participants on the same blog (<http://seminaryofthestreets.wordpress.com/>).

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