

# Central States Synod - ELCA

## Tri-State Area Ministry Newsletter

Summer 2011

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY, June 3-5, 2011**

#### **Synod Assembly Offering**

This year our Synod Assembly offerings will go towards three ministries:

- Campus Ministry programs in St. Louis, MO., Lawrence, KS., and Manhattan, KS.
- Hillside Community Lutheran Church, Spring Hill, KS. (Greater Kansas City Area), a new mission start in our synod
- ELCA World Hunger Appeal

Offering envelopes were mailed to all congregations. The Bishop's letter that can be read on the Sunday of Synod Assembly in congregations is available on-line.

### **BETHANY HOUSE OF STUDIES**

One of the purposes of Bethany House of Studies is to promote lifelong learning. To this end Bethany House of Studies is offering the course Introduction to the Old Testament over the summer. Anyone is welcome to take the course.

- It may be a course you are interested in taking for no other purpose than to learn.
- It may be a course you need to take for the Parish Ministry Associate Program.
- You may be considering enrolling in the Parish Ministry Associate Program and want to "try out" a class.
- You may simply want to "sit in" on face-to-face class meetings without having to complete any assignments.

A face-to-face class is already planned for those in Area Ministry 2. Other face-to-face classes or distance learning options will be available depending upon interest in the course.

Please respond to [sncuster@cox.net](mailto:sncuster@cox.net) if you are interested in taking the course. You will be contacted shortly.

### **INVITATION TO AREA MINISTRY MEETING**

#### **Sharon Springs**

The congregation at Sharon Lutheran Church invites all to a special evening with missionaries to Papua New Guinea Sunday evening, July 17 for an Area Ministry event. Missionaries Nancy Anderson and Pr. Rod Nordby are on furlough visiting sponsoring congregations in Kansas and Missouri. We plan to meet at 5:00 pm MDT at the church in south Sharon Springs just off hi-way K-27, 503 S Gardner. Bring salads or desserts, the Sharon congregation will provide main dishes.

#### **Glocal Mission Gathering in Wichita**

**Friday afternoon & evening and Saturday, daytime**

**September 30 & October 1 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 925 N. Waco.**

**Sign up now!** ELCA with Central States Synod and Wichita area hosts will bring together people, music, stories, worship, meals, and mission ideas, from here and around the world in a festive welcoming spirit.

**Congregations** are bringing pastors and leadership teams, in worship, music, education, outreach, youth.

**Individuals & families welcome.** Make plans and register now. All ages, everyone, across the Synod and beyond, invited.

**Speakers:** Leaders of global and local ministries, including former Bishop Rev. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director of ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission.

**Workshops:** Gather with others to gain and share ideas to strengthen congregational and personal mission and ministry.

**Worship, music, and meals** in a festive glocal spirit.

Come in attire of other lands where you have lived... Spend an extra day to enjoy Wichita's welcome in local church worship and at many attractions... see [www.GoWichita.com](http://www.GoWichita.com) for ideas.

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**Register now** – Only \$35. Online at [www.elca.org/glocal](http://www.elca.org/glocal); Hotels' special rates listed. Info also on Facebook "Wichita KS Glocal Mission Gathering." For paper registration form, call St. Paul's, 316-263-0810 or [jkibler@css-elca.org](mailto:jkibler@css-elca.org)

## TORNADO OUBREAK

An outbreak of tornadoes tore across the Midwest recently, leaving a path of destruction from Texas to Minnesota.

Especially hard-hit is Joplin, Mo., where a powerful tornado leveled parts of the community, killing at least 120 people. Residents say the city is completely unrecognizable.

The building that housed an ELCA congregation has been destroyed, according to its pastor. Please keep the Rev. Bill Pape and the people of Peace Lutheran Church in Joplin in your prayers.

This outbreak is one of several destructive storms this spring. Communities throughout the Midwest and South have also faced widespread damage due to floods and severe storms.

ELCA Disaster Response is already assessing the situation in Joplin and other areas affected by severe storms and flooding. [Your gifts are needed to help provide for the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by these disasters.](#)

All of your gifts—100 percent—designated for "U.S. Severe Storms" will be used for emergency and long-term assistance following these storms. [Please give generously](#) and continue to pray for those whose lives have been uprooted by this disaster.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Daniel Rift Director, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

## NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING

The 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering which will be held July 18-22, 2012 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The theme is "Citizens with the Saints", Ephesians 2:14-20. Registration opens October 9, 2011. Mindy Tillberg ([mt2820b@gmail.com](mailto:mt2820b@gmail.com)) is the coordinator for CSS.

## AREA NEWS

**From Goodland;** The final vote to leave ELCA took place on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. The vote was a decisive yes. Emmanuel Lutheran Church will be offering Sky Ranch Vacation Bible School here in Goodland, July 18-22, 2011. Please contact Pastor Darian Hybl ([darian.hybl@gmail.com](mailto:darian.hybl@gmail.com)) or the church office for more details and times.

**From Sharon Springs;** Our sponsored missionaries will be in Sharon Springs Sunday evening July 17 for an area ministry event. Join us at 5:00 MDT

### From Brewster;

Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation) was held on May 15 at Our Savior's. Youth were - Alicia Barrie and Jace Jorgensen. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans presented the cross in addition to other congregational family gifts.

Graduates from Our Savior's: Alicia Barrie and Jace Jorgensen from 8th grade, Whitney Schultz from Brewster high school, Avery Schultz from Fort Hays State University.

Gloria Ribordy continues leukemia treatment at Wichita. She is staying at her brother's home in Hutchinson. Address should anyone wish to send a card:

Gloria Ribordy  
c/o Bruce Schultz  
4012 Mission Dr.  
Hutchinson, KS 67502

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## **From Sharron Knox**

Central States Synod Council will meet on June 3 prior to Assembly if anyone has input for me. I will be attending council and assembly. I know Pastor Charlotte will be at Assembly. I will also be attending Churchwide Assembly in Florida week of August 15.

Phil Knox was part of a 22 member team of Gideons who conducted an International Scripture Blitz in Central America in early March. 654,000 testaments were distributed in Guatemala and Nicaragua - mostly to school children but some to college students, prisoners, and military personnel. He would be willing to provide a presentation if any area groups would have an interest.

## **Wonderful World of Stewardship in Western Kansas**

**SUBMITTED BY REV. GEORGE T. RAHN, PASTOR  
LUTHERAN PARISH OF WESTERN KANSAS**

Sharon Lutheran Church, Sharon Springs, Kan. (part of Lutheran Parish of Western Kansas) recently sold their parsonage. The proceeds were invested in the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA. A loan has been extended to the Navajo Lutheran Mission, Rock Point, Ariz. to be used for capital improvements. We are grateful to God for this chance to further the important mission of the Gospel for the Navajo community. Jesus says: "...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." The Gospel of St. Mark 10:45.

*(reprinted from May/June MAKING CHRIST KNOWN)*

## **FROM CORE CONNECTION**

### **Frequently asked questions**

**Question: Now that there are alternative denominations, why do some confessing Lutherans choose to remain in the ELCA or ELCIC?**

This question is often asked of the Rev. Mark Chavez, Lutheran CORE director, as he makes presentations across the country. Although it is true that in response to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly decisions many churches and individuals have left the ELCA to join the North American Lutheran Church or Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, there are also faithful Lutherans who have decided to stay within the ELCA, states Chavez. Lutheran CORE's work to link and resource

confessing Lutherans consists of supporting those who leave and those who stay in the ELCA, says Chavez.

The Rev. Dr. Steve Shipman serves as pastor of Southern Clinton County Lutheran Parish in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. He also serves as a member of the Lutheran CORE steering committee. Pr. Shipman believes that confessing Lutherans remaining in the ELCA fall into two groups. The first group consists of persons who were ordained into the ELCA and believe they have a call from God to witness within the ELCA by staying put, he says. The second group (which includes myself) is comprised of those who believe God has called them to serve specific congregations that for whatever reason are not prepared to leave the ELCA, says Shipman. There are many congregations that are stuck insofar as they do not have the votes to disaffiliate, he says, and there are many for whom congregational loyalty and friendships within the congregation trump theological objections at the national level.

Pr. Ronald Marshall of First Lutheran, West Seattle, Washington, has chosen to remain in the ELCA. In October of 2009, he published an article in First Lutheran's newsletter, —On Thinking About Leaving the ELCA, in which he outlined eight reasons to stay within the denomination. Pr. Marshall firmly believes that the ELCA needs the prophetic witness of people such as Lutheran CORE members to speak a word of judgment to the church. Those who leave, argues Marshall, cannot provide this prophetic word. Nor does such a prophetic word need to be a success, but rather represents the suffering inherent in the cross, he writes. Furthermore, he argues, Luther himself did not abandon the Catholic church of his own accord but instead was thrown out. By his example, then, says Marshall, we should stay where we are until we're kicked out.

The Rev. Natalie Gessert of Oak Grove Church ELCA in Zelienople, Pennsylvania, agrees. There is a temptation to excuse myself from this conversation and keep ecclesiastical (even personal) fellowship with only those in concord with my theology, says Gessert. Jesus Christ died for the ungodly; for His betrayers and enemies (Rom. 5:6), which, for the record, includes me. So long as Christian freedom is present to continue preaching and distributing the Sacraments, I'm called to remain next to those who

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serve in this broken institution, she says. A prophetic ministry also speaks to an imperfect institution. Both Pr. Marshall and Dr. Hinlicky-Wilson point out that there have always been heretical theologies and practices within the church. There has never been a time when the church was not dogged and plagued by false teachers, writes the Rev. Dr. Hinlicky-Wilson in an editorial for *Lutheran Forum* entitled "Why Stay?"

Hinlicky-Wilson, a research professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, notes that the Arian and Donatist heresies were long-lived examples of false teachers holding power within the church. For both Hinlicky-Wilson and Marshall, leaving the ELCA would be no guarantee of doctrinal purity for whatever church they were to join. Dr. Hinlicky-Wilson believes a Christian's church life should reflect one's faith commitments. She asks the question, "If the Gospel is all about loving one's enemy, how can we love the enemy if we are out of fellowship with them?"

Still others feel trapped because their parishes are not financially viable enough to stand on their own and need the subsidies provided by the ELCA. This is especially true of some ministries that struggle among specialized demographics and serve ethnic minorities. Confessing Lutherans at ELCA seminaries or ELCA-related universities or colleges might find disaffiliation difficult given that their livelihood depends on institutions of higher learning that do not yet exist in the renewal movements. Lutheran CORE isn't telling anyone what they should do, whether to leave or stay, says Pr. Chavez. —Each individual and congregation must prayerfully consider what our Lord is calling them to do. Some have discerned that He is calling them to remain in their current denomination and bear witness to the truth of His Gospel, even in the most difficult situations. Others have discerned they are called to move to another denomination. Either way they decide, we are here to support them.

The bond between Lutherans who agree on the confession of the Christian faith is far more significant than institutional affiliation, says Chavez. Lutheran CORE will work hard to see that institutional affiliation does not get in the way of Lutherans supporting each other across denominational lines to bear witness to Jesus Christ and making disciples, he adds.

## LUTHERAN PLANNED GIVING

### *Your Last Impression*

The first impression we make on others is likely the most important. For example, a person applying for a professional position in scruffy clothes creates an initial impression that may cause the interview to end before it starts. The impression can signal a casual attitude and careless concern for personal appearance.

Initial impressions, for better or worse, linger in the eye of the beholder. While positive first impressions remain into the future, negative first impressions can also last for years and may require sustained effort to change.

Perhaps the most important last impression is what transpires at death. How we die, of course, is important, but so is the lingering effect of how we have arranged our affairs prior to death. A person who dies with a well-considered estate plan in place will create a more positive impression than one who leaves behind a hodgepodge of loose ends and ambiguous or nonexistent directions.

A competent estate planning attorney can help us prepare for a positive final impression. Such thoughtful planning may include final gifts to ministry organizations we have supported during life. These gifts can take various forms, including will bequests and life-income arrangements. They can be used to fund endowments or as outright gifts directed toward specific programs.

Will your last impression be perceived as positive? Would you like to discuss some tried and true ways to leave a good last impression not only on family and friends, but for many who share your commitment to the mission of ELCA ministries?

Our ELCA Lutheran Planned Giving regional gift planner, Joyce "JP" Palmer is available to meet with individuals/couples to discuss their estate gift desires. She welcomes the opportunity to suggest ways to transfer your estate so as to best remember loved ones and sustain ministries for which you have a passion, and thus you will leave a good last impression.

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