

Moments for Mission

Newsletter of the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*The mission of the Southwestern Washington Synod is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ
by empowering congregations and church leaders to grow in worship,
education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.*

June 2010



Please share this monthly e-newsletter. If you would like to subscribe, send a request to the synod office or rachelpritchett@msn.com.

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2010 Assembly

They Came from Near, Far to Do Synod's Work

VANCOUVER, Wash. – Some 300 turned out under gloriously sunny skies here on May 14 and 15 for the 23rd Annual Assembly of the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The theme was “God’s Work. Our Hands. Renewing Your Congregation.”

About 350 representatives from the synod’s 93 congregations with 44,000 members met to take care of the synod’s nuts-and-bolts business such as electing new leaders and passing a new budget. Some were here for the first time and some seasoned veterans.

They also worshipped at nearby Trinity Lutheran Church, and had time to meet new friends and re-connect with the old. They enjoyed a Friday-evening banquet and raffle benefiting the synod’s “1,000 Mission Friends” program, which supports new missions and renewing congregations.

Bishop Robert D. Hofstad delivered his Bishop’s Report, and spoke of this year’s fallout from the 2009 churchwide sexuality vote. Participants also saluted this year’s recipient of the Bishop’s Award, the Rev. Rod Kastle, mentor to many pastors, and enjoyed numerous enlightening workshops and informative displays.

If you missed the assembly this year, consider coming in 2011 to the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound to join in an always new, always rewarding experience. The theme will be health and wellness; families are encouraged to come and enjoy the fun in the water.

Visit www.lutheranssw.org for more.

In Namibia

Bishop Robert D. Hofstad and six others are in Namibia through June 5, where the Southwestern Washington Synod has a companion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. The group will bring books for a seminary from Ann Miller of Trinity Lutheran Church of Tacoma, high-school scholarship funds from Redeemer Lutheran Church of Fircrest, knitted hats for infants and children from throughout the synod, and a portion of the offering from the recent synod assembly. Blog with the travelers at www.namibiaconnect.blogspot.com. Read here about the trip in the next Moments for Mission.

Congregations in Transition

Mobility

Call Process	Position	Status	Pastoral Care
All Saints, Auburn	P	TR	Sarah Roemer
Christ, Belfair	P	TR	Pulpit Supply
Elim, Port Orchard	P	TR	Steven Ray
Emmanuel, Bremerton	P	TR	Pulpit Supply
Emmanuel, Tacoma	AP	NV	Dan Shaw
Faith, Shelton	AP	I	Steve Olson
First, Port Orchard	P	TR	Joe Smith
Grace, Port Townsend	P	C	Beth Orling
Hope, Tacoma	P	TR	Randy Olson
Ocean Park	P	I	Pulpit Supply
Our Saviour's, Cathlamet	P	TR	Les Foss
Peninsula, Gig Harbor	AP	NV	Paul Schroeder
Salishan, Tacoma	P	TR	Pulpit Supply
Spanaway	P	I	Dennis Hartsook
Spirit of Life, Port Orchard	P	NV	Pulpit Supply
Trinity, Enumclaw	P	TR	Dennis Hartsook
United, Tacoma	P	TR	Jan Otto

Mobility position key: P – Pastor; AP – Associate Pastor; AIM – Associate in Ministry; DM – Diaconal Minister
Mobility status key: NV – New Vacancy; TR – Transition; I – Interviewing; C – Calling

2010 Assembly

Bishop's Report: 'We are at a Crossroads'

A somber Bishop Robert D. Hofstad addressed the fallout among congregations from the 2009 churchwide decision to allow for the possibility of gay or lesbian persons in committed relationships to serve as pastors.

Since the decision, seven of the 93 congregations in the Southwestern Washington Synod took the first of two required votes to leave the ELCA. Of those, four failed to reach the required two-thirds majority to proceed to a second and final vote. Of the three that proceeded to a second vote, one received the necessary votes to leave the synod. With sadness, the bishop said Lutheran Church of the Redeemer of Chimacum has left.

Many more congregations are choosing to distance themselves from the synod and ELCA with redirecting their financial gifts, he said. First-quarter benevolences to the synod are down 20 percent from first quarter 2009.

If the trend continues, the work of the synod to establish new congregations and support pastors and congregations will suffer, Bishop Hofstad said.

He encouraged listeners to return to their congregations and discuss whether this is what they truly want.

"We are at a crossroads," he cautioned. If congregations pull back from every effort to spread the gospel "then we cannot lay claim to be an evangelical church."

Continues

2010 Assembly

Bishop's Report: *Continued*

■ **Meets with world leaders:** Bishop Hofstad reported on two trips taken in the past year, one to the Middle East and the other to Europe. In the Middle East, Bishop Hofstad joined with other ELCA bishops to offer continued support to the six congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Christians in Jerusalem are “caught in the crosshairs” in the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Hofstad said, and the congregations’ future is in jeopardy every day.

Hofstad also joined ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and others for an ecumenical visit to Europe to meet and confer with the world’s top religious leaders. The contingent also visited with leaders of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches in Switzerland.

Bishop's Award: Mentor to Pastors Receives Honor

The Rev. Rod Kastle of Aberdeen received the Bishop’s Award at the assembly.

Pastor Kastle, who is retired, has counseled many pastors in the synod over the years, particularly young ones, often over coffee at a restaurant. He has walked with them as they struggled with discouragement, loneliness and leadership.

Among those he has helped is the Rev. Jan Ruud of Tacoma, who said, “Rod used his natural gifts as a listener and encourager in ways that strengthened my ministry and blessed me in my daily life.”

Another was the Rev. David Monsen of Aberdeen, who said, “His appreciation and understanding of how the grain will respond to his working of it is a living metaphor of his understanding and appreciation of the grain of those he has mentored, such as myself.”

Kastle summed up his advice to pastors in three sentences:

“You’re worth more than you’re getting paid.”

“You’re doing a better job that you realize.”

“You’re more effective than you think.”

Keynoter: Look to Evangelicals to Inject a Little Life

Keynoter the Rev. Dr. James Wellman said those looking to put a little life back in their congregations should borrow some techniques from the evangelicals.

The University of Washington religion professor has surveyed hundreds of church-goers in dozens of congregations and is the author of “Evangelical vs. Liberal: The Clash of Christian Cultures in the Pacific Northwest.” Wellman, who also is a Presbyterian minister, said this:

Be bold: Be bold about proclaiming the Bible and Gospel.

Share: Share spiritual, life-changing experiences with others. Your words carry inspiration.

Convert your kids: Others are, so why not be first? He asked parents in the audience.

Be kid-centric in your congregations: Hire the best youth directors, pay them well and support them with everything you’ve got, he advised.

Start small groups: Start small groups for worship and study to intensify relationships.

Use technology: Visuals, Facebook and Twitter are how many now connect, he said.

Talk about sin: Like the evangelicals, talk about sin, such as addictions. “People need to hear about the sin and how to overcome it,” he said.

Expect God to act: Ask God for what you need, and expect an answer, he advised.

2010 Assembly

Mission Starts: Ex-House Church, Fading Congregation Lifted

Two new mission starts within the Southwestern Washington Synod were lifted up at the assembly by the Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger, the synod's director of evangelical mission.

They include one that is worshipping at Calvary Lutheran Church of Federal Way called Federal Way Chinese Fellowship, headed by the Revs. Mike and Rowena Wang.

The congregation formerly met as a house church.

"They have begun to partner as two faith communities," said Pastor Wallschlaeger, who also predicted the two groups will someday worship as one.

The other is St. Christopher Community Church near Olympia, which the Episcopal Church in the United States of America was going to close. It was only worshipping 13 people.

"But God wouldn't have it," she said.

A conversation was begun to set up a federated congregation that would be recognized both by the ELCA and the Episcopal Church USA. The church now worships about 85 people per weekend, and soon will have the benefit of a full-time ELCA mission developer.

Thanks to the ELCA's Mission Investment Fund, work will be done to make the building more accessible, as well as other improvements.

"These are two congregations God is birthing among us," Wallschlaeger said.

Others including the Living Stones Prison Congregation at the Washington Corrections Center at Shelton, and a second site of Messiah Lutheran Church of Vancouver in Ridgefield, which will start offering worship services in September.

Synod Budget: Year Begins with Steep Drop in Benevolences

A depressed economy and church division over the 2009 churchwide vote on sexuality have been some of the factors causing benevolences from congregations to the synod to fall 20 percent in the first quarter of 2010, according to Treasurer Andreas Udbye.

Udbye called the decrease "serious," but also said the disappointing quarter followed a fairly stable year in synod finances, where revenues dropped only 1.3 percent from 2008.

The assembly approved a proposed \$1,165,000 budget for 2011, a slight increase over the 2010 budget, but with benevolences adjusted downward to reflect the recent trend.

The new budget increases giving to the ELCA from 38.5 percent to 39 percent, and continues support at current levels for regional partnerships, such as ELCA seminaries and Pacific Lutheran University. Funding for the synod's two priorities – starting new missions and providing pastoral care – are larger in the new budget.

A few other financial notes:

Udbye said that in 2009, the average benevolence per congregation was \$11,750, down from \$12,052 the year before.

The synod's Endowment Fund, which lost 37 percent of its value in 2008, gained back 24 percent in 2009 and continues to recover, Udbye said. The fund is invested with the Mission Investment Fund and other investment vehicles.

2010 Assembly

Persons Approved
for Synod Posts

Voting members of the assembly approved the following persons to synod leadership positions.

Secretary

Rev. Kim Latterell

Council

Pos. 1: John Jablonski

Pos. 2: Rev. Lori Cornell

Pos. 3: Marcus Rieke

Pos. 4: Elise Erickson

Pos. 5: Ann Cummings

Pos. 6: Rev. Linda Milks

Call Committee

Pos. 1: Melissa Tade

Pos. 2: Rev. Beth Utto-Galarneau

Pos. 3: Carmen Ode

Consultation Committee

Pos. 1: Duane Thompson

Discipline Committee

Pos. 1: Rev. Jeffrey Spencer

Nominating Committee

Pos. 3: Kenneth Lindhom

Pos. 5: Debbie Tertocha

Pos. 8: Rev. Jon Petersen

PLU Corporate Delegate

Pos. 1: Rev. Carol Plummer

Pos. 2: Robert Baldwin

Pos. 4: Rev. Christopher Ode

Pos. 6: Noreen Gulhaugen

Pos. 7: Karen Meyer

Churchwide Voting

Members for 2011

Pos. 1: Rev. Rachel Wangen-Hoch

Pos. 2: Rev. Kathleen Boyer-Visser

Pos. 3: MaryAnne Nelson

Pos. 5: James Pence

Pos. 6: Kathryn Johnson

Assembly Briefs

Sharing Ideas at Youth Workshop

One of the big draws of the assembly are its workshops, where participants learn something new and deliver back to their congregations. Justin Snider of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church led one attended by youth directors from across the synod.

All were hungry to share and get new ideas. Among the ideas were “Sleuths, Spies and Superguys,” a popular lock-in filled with mystery and intrigue at Family of Grace of Auburn; croquet parties; gong shows; challenges to other congregations for volleyball matchups; and mission trips at home. Snider said he’s planning one for this summer in which his youth will work at the Salvation Army and Union Gospel Mission in Olympia. Snider is an associate in ministry and chair of the synod’s ALYVE board, which stands for Associated Lutheran Youth in Various Endeavors. If you are struggling for ideas or have some to share, contact Snider at youthdirector@gloriadeiolympia.org.

‘1,000 Mission Friends’ Resolution Approved

This year’s assembly had only one resolution before it – to support “1,000 Mission Friends” – and voting members endorsed it unanimously. Contact the synod office to make a contribution.

Thanks for Work in Face of Tragedy

Bishop Robert D. Hofstad thanked the Revs. Lori Cornell and Doug Chamberlain of Calvary Lutheran Church of Federal Way for their work following the shooting death of a woman by her estranged husband while she was receiving counseling with Lutheran Counseling Network at the church this winter. The bishop said, “I want to publicly commend Lori and Doug for their good and faithful work in a devastating event.” A Moment of Blessing at the site of the tragedy was held May 22.

Jan Olson Recognized

Synod Secretary Janice Olson was thanked by the bishop for four years as secretary of the synod. She will be replaced by the Rev. Kim Latterell. Olson served three years on the council previously.

VP Gives Update on Listening Initiative

Jim Hushagen, the synod’s vice president, updated the assembly on an ongoing initiative by the synod council to visit all of the 93 congregations. The purpose of council members’ visit isn’t to seek money, but instead is to listen and discover how the synod can assist them to achieve their dreams, he said. So far, council members have visited 43 congregations, and for Hushagen, each of the visits has been “a powerful and rewarding experience.” He’s discovered some congregations need help with stewardship. Others need ideas for outreach. Some need healing from the sexuality decision. All need each other. “We are better when we work together,” he said.

News**Petersen Remembers Loved Ones by Building Houses for Poor**

FIRCREST – The Rev. Dr. Gary Petersen of Redeemer Lutheran Church, his family and circle of friends are turning tragedy and sadness into hope. Petersen’s father, Ken, died in 2009 at age 87, and in his honor Pastor Petersen was planning to build a Habitat for Humanity house in Totonicapan, Guatemala. Petersen has a long history of building Habitat for Humanity homes there.

Then Petersen got a double whammy. His nephew, Hans, 30, died after falling off a construction platform four stories up. To honor Hans, it was decided to build another Habitat house, and that number now has grown to three houses. About 24 of Petersen family including wife Linda and daughter Carrie and friends will travel to Totonicapan from July 3 to 18 to build the homes. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will help.

“It will be a reunion; there will be tears. But that love passes on, I think,” Pastor Petersen said. To learn more, contact him at pastor@redeemerlc.org or (253) 564-5053.

Upcoming Events, Announcements**Conference Looks at Ends to Human Trafficking**

Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church of Gig Harbor and the South Puget Sound Women of Vision will host a conference on June 5th at the church featuring speakers engaged in the battle to end human trafficking. All are invited to the conference titled “Break the Chain: A Conference of Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery,” from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The \$40 cost includes a box lunch. Register at www.wovsps.org.

‘Music that Makes Community’ Teaching Event in Portland

Coming to Portland on June 10 through 12 is a “Music that Makes Community” event. Scott Weidler, ELCA associate director of worship and music, will be a presenter in the event sponsored by All Saints Company. To learn more, visit www.allsaintscompany.org or e-mail Weidler at scott.weidler@elca.org.

PLU Summer Conference Coming

“The Spiritual Formation of the Pastoral Leader” is the topic of the Pacific Lutheran University Summer Conference on Pastoral Theology, taking place June 28 to 30 at the university. The conference, designed for ordained and lay leaders, will feature Timothy Wengert and others. To learn more, contact the Rev. G. Lee Kluth with the Office of Congregation Relations at kluthgl@plu.edu or (253) 535-7423. To register, visit www.plu.edu/crel.

Housing Available for Creation Fest Goers

Creation Fest, the largest Christian music festival in the Western United States, takes place at the Enumclaw Expo Center from July 21 to 24. As many as 20,000 young people are planned to attend. Hope Lutheran Church of Enumclaw is opening its doors for people needing a place to stay overnight. It’s on a first-come, first-served basis, according to the Rev. Dan Wilson of Hope. The church is two miles from the festival. For more information, contact the church at (360) 825-2420 or hlcoffice@skynetbb.com. Creation Fest also will have camping near the Expo Center.

Upcoming Events, Announcements

Summer Arts Youth Camp Planned

St. Mark's by The Narrows Lutheran Church of Tacoma invites all youth to come to its Summer Arts Youth Camp, to be held each afternoon from 1 to p.m. from Aug. 8 through 12. Young people entering the sixth through 12 grades who like theater, singing, the visual arts or who play an instrument would like this week of activities. The cost is \$75. For more information, contact Danielle Lemieux at danielle@smlutheran.org or (253) 752-4966.

Choral Camp to Happen at Lutherwood Near Bellingham

Lutheran Music Program and Camp Lutherwood near Bellingham will present a choral camp from Aug. 15 to 20 for youth in grades five through nine at Camp Lutherwood. Norma Aamodt-Nelson, minister of music at Trinity Lutheran Church of Lynnwood, will teach. The camp will conclude with a special concert in the Lutherwood chapel. To learn more, visit lutheransummermusic.org or call (888) 635-6583. To register, visit www.camplutherwood.org/register/index.shtml.

Church-Planting Conference Scheduled for Autumn

Messiah Lutheran in Vancouver is hosting a Churches Planting Churches Conference from Oct. 17 to 19. The event is the only conference of its kind offered this year for congregations and pastors of the ELCA. It is suitable for those considering a satellite or second site, or working with neighboring congregations to birth an independent start. For more information, contact synod Director for Evangelical Mission the Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger at (253) 535-8300 at her office; (253) 225-9721 on her cell; or at Melanie.Wallschlaeger@elca.org.

Opportunity in Fall to Increase Cultural Competency

The first of a series of quarterly events to strengthen cultural competency will be Oct. 23 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church of Olympia. To be led by Trinity Lutheran College professor Stacy Kitahata, the series is in response to a resolution approved by the 2009 synod assembly to make worshipers more aware in this area. To learn more, contact the Rev. Eric Wangen-Hoch at pastoreric@hotmail.com.

'Empowering Life' Helping Incarcerated Women

Joan Nelson, president of Empowering Life, invites all to become acquainted with the organization that helps incarcerated women and their families mend their lives. The program offers pastoral care, coaching, grief classes and mentoring when the woman re-enters the community. The Southwestern Washington Women of the ELCA are behind this program. Sharon Peterson is the program director. For more information, contact Nelson at (253) 208-3307 or joan2nelson@comcast.net.

Lutherwood Camp Comes to our Synod

Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center in Bellingham is expanding to include an outpost camp at Buck Creek (near Mt. Rainier) during the week of July 11-16, 2010. You'll get all of the traditional camp experiences- swimming, archery, ropes course, games, friends, camp songs, learning about your faith, hiking and zip lining for grades 3rd-12th. It's only \$300/week (\$200 if your church submitted a letter of intent at the Synod Assembly.) register at www.camplutherwoodbuckcreek.org.

Our congregations

From newsletters across the synod, for keeping up

Farewell and Godspeed: Pastor Timothy Stewart of **Trinity of Parkland** announced that visitation pastor Don Little is retiring. Little visited countless shut-ins, taught adult-education classes and coordinated confirmation programs. Stewart invites all to say farewell to Little and wife Joan on June 13 at Trinity. A lunch and reception follows the 11 a.m. service.

112 and Counting: Peace of Puyallup on May 23 celebrated 112 years of worship with two special anniversary services.

Retiring: After 10 years, Marge Halstead is leaving as director of the choir at **Peace of Puyallup** as husband Bud retires from the military. **Arlene Hoveland**, for 23 years the organist at **Bethany of Spanaway**, has retired, and the congregation gave a reception in her honor March 21.

NightWatch: Trinity of Parkland on May 30 introduced a new Sunday night service called NightWatch. Starting at 9 p.m. the half-hour service takes place in the chancel area of the sanctuary and is in the “compline” or “before-retiring” tradition.

Building Wheelchair Ramps: Many youth groups from across the synod now are choosing domestic mission venues rather than in Mexico, due to turmoil there. Building wheelchair ramps for elderly and handicapped Native Americans is just part of the mission work young people **from Trinity of Vancouver** are planning when they visit Fort Hall, Idaho, for a week in July. Young people from **St. Andrew of Vancouver** will do maintenance work on homes belonging to Native Americans in need of assistance during a mission trip to Lapwai, Idaho, in July.

New Intern: Kristin Rice is the new intern at **St. Andrew of Vancouver**, and will be installed June 6.

Keeping Green: Holy Trinity of Port Angeles is staying green by: 1) Saving coffee grounds for garden compost; 2) recycling office waste; 3) Adding a second layer of insulating glass to sanctuary windows; 4) Adding bark to a memorial garden; 5) Serving fair-trade coffee; 6) Using Earth-friendly cleaning supplies; and 7) Installing fans in the sanctuary to distribute heat.

Top Ten: Traci Vatne, director of youth and family ministry at **Messiah of Auburn**, recently shared her “Top Ten Reasons I am Proud of Our Youth.” They include: 10) The youth are “incredible representatives” of the church, families and Lord; 9) They went to Seattle recently to serve at the Compass Center; 8) They serve at community suppers and at a food bank; 7) They do monthly devotions at Starbucks; 6) They have an evangelical spirit; 5) They invite people to church; 4) They share prayer concerns; 3) They are welcoming; 2) They love to be together; and 1) They shared an incredible high-school Bible study, dinner and games at Vatne’s home during Holy Week.

Tanzania Talk: Folks from **St. Mark of Lacey** early in May listened to Tanzania missionaries Jean Wahlstrom and Marvin Kananen speak on their service at the Maasai Lutheran Girl’s School.

Summer interns: Messiah of Vancouver welcomes two summer interns, Rachael Marie Manzo and Ben Hogue. Both are students from California Lutheran University.

Bunco barbecue: The women of **All Saints of Auburn** will host a Be-Bop Bunco Barbecue on July 31 at the church as their annual scholarship fundraiser; (253) 852-4884.

Have Information for the Newsletter?

Send information to the synod office or directly to Editor Rachel Pritchett at rachelpritchett@msn.com or (206) 498-0920.

Calendar

June 5: Human-trafficking conference, Gig Harbor, *see Page 6*

June 10 to 12: Music event, Portland, *see Page 6*

June 25 to 27: Women of the ELCA Region 1 gathering, Kalispell, Mont.

June 28 to 30: PLU Summer Conference, *see Page 6*

July 21 to 24: Creation Fest, www.creationfest.com

July 28: Mount Rainier Cluster gathering of the Southwestern Washington Women of the ELCA, Puyallup

Aug. 8 to 12: Summer Arts Youth Camp, St. Mark's, Tacoma, *see Page 7*

Aug 15 to 20: Choral Camp, Bellingham, *see Page 7*

Aug. 21: Southwestern Washington Women of the ELCA Bible Study Event, Silverdale

Oct. 8 to 9: Southwestern Washington Women of the ELCA convention, Longview

Oct. 15 to 16: Ethics of Eating conference, PLU, co-sponsored with Northwest Washington Synod

Oct. 17 to 19: Church-planting conference, *see Page 7*

Oct. 23: Cultural-competency training, Gloria Dei, Olympia, *see Page 7*

Oct. 23: Healthy Homes, Healthy Families event, Mountain View Community Center, Edgewood

Jan. 23 to 25: Prayer retreat, Seabeck

Jan. 25 to 26: Bishop's Convocation, Seabeck

Feb. 12, 2011: Cultural-competency training, Silverdale

March 4 to 6, 2011: Synod Combined Junior/Senior High School Gathering, Black Lake Bible Camp, www.swwayouthministry.org

May 13 to 14, 2011: Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly, Grand Mound

May 18 and 19, 2012: Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly, Vancouver, Wash.

June 7 to 9, 2013: Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly, Tacoma

End of newsletter