

SAINT PAUL AREA SYNOD

FaithLink

Connecting Leaders of the Saint Paul Area Synod (ELCA)

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Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)

Missionaries with Minnesota roots



Katie Menke (Our Saviour's, Hastings) currently serves as a volunteer for Young Adults in Global Mission in Corrientes, Argentina, a town five hours outside the Argentinian capital of Buenos Aires. Among her many projects, Menke spends much of her time with the men and women of Ferias Francas, a network of farmers' markets in Corrientes.

The Global Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) emphasizes that, "We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world—together." Through the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program, ELCA Global Mission calls into the world over 60 young adults between the ages 19-29 to a year of service in one of more than ten countries. Volunteers serve in the spirit of accompaniment—walking together with global companions in mutuality, solidarity, and interdependence.

Of those currently serving, about seven of them have roots in the Saint Paul Area Synod. These young missionaries arrived to their current placements in August 2013 and will live there until July 2014.

The breaking of (banana) bread

One such missionary is Katie Menke. Menke, a member at Our Savior's, Hastings, is serving her YAGM year in Corrientes, Argentina, a town five hours outside the Argentinian capital of Buenos Aires. While Menke has worked on a number of different projects, she is currently working with an organization known as Ferias Francas de Corrientes, a loosely associated network of about 32 farmers' markets. Menke has been charged to meet with and listen to the people of Ferias Francas. Menke says that sometimes to break the ice, she'll bring banana bread to enjoy with the farmers or campesinos as they're called in Argentina.

Menke has found that while the markets in this network have been gathering for quite some time, no centralized system has been created to communicate when and where these markets will be. Thus emerged Menke's current task of working with the people of Ferias Francas to create an interactive map of the various markets and to find a way to get this map in the hands of tourism agencies in order to promote the location and times of the markets.

When Menke is not making banana bread to share with farmers, she is making meals for her friends and community in Corrientes. One of Menke's favorite memories has been a Thanksgiving dinner she planned in November—complete with four apple pies, one pumpkin pie, and lots of stuffing!

Between her connections at the University women's house where she lives, an English speaking class with which she works, and the relationships she has made in her day-to-day life, more than 30 people came to enjoy this Thanksgiving meal. "I was really happy that people came," says Menke about the dinner. As they ate, people went around the table and said things they were thankful for. People laughed. People cried. Community was built. Menke hopes to plan more of these dinners in the future.

Slowing down in Sabah

Across the Pacific, Jenna Bergeson is finding that food is also a prominent community builder as she accompanies the people of

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FaithLink is published six times a year by the Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Peter Rogness, Bishop.

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Malaysia. Bergeson, a student at Luther Seminary and native of Christ Lutheran, Blaine (Minneapolis Area Synod), is currently serving in Kota Kinabalu (KK) as a teacher at the Seri Mengasih Centre, a school for differently-abled children and youth.

Bergeson has noticed that the pace in Sabah, the state in which she works and lives, moves a little slower than the hustle and bustle of the Twin Cities. "People take great care with their time for fellowship (i.e. eating or drinking), accommodating others (i.e. feeding people), and service (i.e. preparing meals—sometimes at odd hours)," she says. "The food is delicious and varied, as Malaysia is a place where many cultures meet: Malaysian, Indian, Chinese, Indonesian, Philippine and native cultures like Dusun."

In the midst of teaching, eating, and being with the people of KK, Bergeson has found her experiences and conversation have given her, "great energy and push[ed her]faith in ways it has never been challenged."

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From the Bishop

By Peter Rogness

Using the Replace All command in the Bible

Many of you have learned the shortcut of the Replace All command in your word processing software. Need to update a document you used in 2013? Easy! Use the Replace All command and change 2013 to 2014. Presto! You have a document ready to go for the next year!

There's a word I want to replace in the Bible.

Meanings of some words change with time. The King James Version said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me...." That statement had nothing at all to do with inflicting pain on children, but everything to do with inviting the children to come to Jesus. The meaning of the verb "to suffer" has changed.

I want to replace almost every instance of use of the word "fear" in the Bible, where the object of the word is God. There are lots of them:

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10)
- His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. (Luke 1:50—From Mary's Magnificat)
- But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" (Luke 23:40—The thief on the cross rebuking the other.)
- Or even from Luther's Catechism, where the explanations to the Ten Commandments each starts with "We are to fear and love God so that..."

The problem is that today this word "fear" conjures up danger from attack or tragedy or something really bad happening to us. There are lots of places in the Bible where fear is used in that way, but hardly ever when talking of God. In most instances, fear of God connotes awe and reverence.

We aren't likely to be drawn into a relationship with a loving God because we're afraid of what this God will do to us if we choose to ignore God. Rather, being in awe of the wonder and majesty and mystery that is God, being shrouded in reverence for the holiness and love of the God of the universe—this is the God we meet in Jesus, who loved unconditionally.

And maybe this Replace All command can go even further with our fears, once we have come to understand our relationship with God in this way. The year starts anew in 2014. The new year always brings hopes and fears. Will my job or health hold? Will violence or disease invade my life? Will I like retirement?! It's possible to live in fear of unknowns, and many people do.

I prefer to face the future in much the same way we are to approach God—with awe and mystery and even reverence, knowing God is to be found in all of it.

Maybe that's what Jesus meant when he said, "Do not be anxious about your life." Instead, find your fears. Replace them all with reverence, awe, and mystery instead. The God we meet in Jesus will be there.



Upcoming Training for Rostered Leaders

Power and Boundaries Workshop

Jan. 16, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Roseville Lutheran, Roseville

Bishop Peter Rogness and the Rev. Susan Miller will facilitate a workshop on ethics in ministry for all rostered leaders. The training will include theological content; power and gender issues and appropriate boundaries for rostered leaders; self-care and vulnerability; and a review of the synod's response procedure for accusations of sexual boundary violations.

You are strongly encouraged to attend this workshop if you:

- Have never been part of such a training;
- Are new to ministry;
- Are serving in settings where some of these issues have surfaced; or
- Have not attended one of these sessions for five years or more. (The last workshop for rostered leaders sponsored in the Saint Paul Area Synod was two and one-half years ago.)

The cost is \$25; lunch will be included. Please register online at www.spas-elca.org/power-and-boundaries or by calling Julie Keefe at 651.224.4313 no later than Tuesday, January 7.

Please send your registration fee to the synod office (preferred) or bring it with you to the event.

Miss the bishop election events in November?

"I see today as my opportunity to tell you what you should know about the Office of Bishop, so that you don't make decisions based on an imagined dream world of what the office is like. I want to take you inside the Office of Bishop for these next few minutes. Not simply into the synod office, but into my life these past 28 years..."



Rostered leaders at the Fall Ministerium on Nov. 14 at St. Michael's, Roseville

Bishop Peter Rogness kicked off the 2014 bishop election process in November with a ministerium for rostered leaders of the Saint Paul Area Synod on November 14, 2013, at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Roseville, and a conversation with laity on November 16, 2013, at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, St. Paul.

Bishop Rogness' complete remarks compiled from these two events, "What I Know That I Think You Should Know," are now available on the bishop's blog, "In Mutual Conversation," at www.spas-elca.org.

For a schedule of upcoming events in the bishop election process, [see page 4](#) or visit www.spas-elca.org/bishop-election-2014/events.

‘Wing Our Words:’ Proclaiming the gospel promise to all communities

Featuring

By Beth Helgen, Assembly Manager

This year the Saint Paul Area Synod assembly concludes a three-year focus on Lutheran identity, exploring how we proclaim the gospel promise under the theme of “Living Lutheran: Wing Our Words.” How might the gospel promise penetrate all communities? What happens when we shed our reserve and shy proclivities and set ourselves free, so that our words have wings? Where and on whom might our words light? Whom might our words uplift or shelter?

Dr. David Lose, associate professor of biblical preaching at Luther Seminary, will join us as the keynote speaker. Lose speaks frequently at workshops and seminars around the country. He was part of the team that developed WorkingPreacher.org, and has created a blog, “In the Meantime,” that features daily Bible devotions and articles on connecting faith and daily life.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will serve as the churchwide representative, both providing updates and stories of the work we do together as the ELCA and overseeing the election of the bishop. In addition, Eaton will preach at the closing worship service on Saturday, May 17, in which we celebrate what has been and what is to come in the Saint Paul Area Synod.

Identify voting members early!

Much of the agenda will be devoted to the election of a new bishop to succeed Bishop Rogness, who retires in June. You have heard and you will continue to hear reminders to identify your voting members early so that they can be prepared for the election by attending the forum on the synod profile and the candidate forums.

Sixty percent of the people who will elect the new bishop in May will be lay voting members from our congregations. People who find themselves called on to vote in May and have not had the opportunity to participate in the preliminary events in the bishop election process will be at an unfortunate disadvantage and be frustrated. (I know this because I read the evaluations immediately following each year’s synod assembly. Laity who haven’t had a chance to prepare adequately don’t hold back expressing their displeasure with their pastors and congregational leadership!) So identify your voting members early and encourage them along the way to become informed. The more who participate in these discerning discussions, the better for the whole of the synod’s life.

Changes in logistics

Here’s another thing that will be different at this year’s synod assembly—the number of people who attend will likely increase because of interest in the bishop election, and Saturday crowds will be as large as or larger than Friday. Planning for the most effective use of space, for more efficient ways to serve lunches, and for handling overflow crowds is underway and will be communicated in the months ahead via e-news and on the synod website.

Displays not offered in 2014

Because of the changes in logistics, the space we have previously used for the display area will be needed to accommodate registration, food service, and overflow seating. After much discussion, we have decided not to offer display space or tables for this year’s assembly.

Sponsorship opportunities remain available for organizations choosing to offer financial support for the synod assembly. Sponsor-



Dr. David Lose, keynote speaker



Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

ship funds help to provide hospitality for our participants including food and refreshments. All sponsoring organizations will be acknowledged through announcements during assembly; signage acknowledging your sponsorship; sponsorship information printed in assembly publications/materials; and synod website listing.

We value the many ministries and organizations that partner with the ongoing work of the congregations in the Saint Paul Area Synod and ask that you consider providing a \$250 or \$500 sponsorship for the assembly.

Registration

Registration for this year’s assembly opens on February 8 on the synod website. In order to be able to plan more effectively, the following registration fees were approved by the executive committee of the synod council. Register early and save money and time!

Voting Member and Advisor

Feb. 8-March 31	\$140
April 1-30	\$160
After May 1	\$190

Please note that after May 1, registration must be completed on-site.

Visitor

One-Day Registration	\$40
Two-Day Registration	\$70

Plan ahead for on-site registration at the assembly

Because of the need to have adequate time to prepare the credentials report prior to the first ballot for bishop, voting member should plan to arrive early and allow adequate time to register before worship begins at 8:15 a.m. Because the first ballot will be taken shortly after opening worship, and because the ballot must be preceded by an accurate credentials report, on-site check-in and registration will end at 9:30 a.m.. Anyone not registered by then will not be able to vote when the plenary begins, at 10:15 a.m.

Opening worship is at 8:15, and most of our voting members are present by then, so the registration cut-off isn’t an issue. But for anyone needing to arrive late, please note the 9:30 cut-off for credentials for the first ballot. Anyone arriving after 9:30 a.m. will not be able to register and vote until after the first ballot.

Please note that registration will close prior to each ballot to prepare a credentials report, and latecomers will not be allowed to register until the ballot is completed.

Assembly banners available for congregational use



If you have attended a synod assembly within the past five years or so, you’re sure to have seen at least one of the beautiful banners used to display the assembly theme. The banners from the 2008-2013 synod assemblies are now available. Congregations may permanently acquire their choice of these banners on a first come, first served basis. Images including the dimensions of the available banners can be found at www.spas-elca.org/synodassembly.

For more information or to make a request, please contact Cyndi Berg in the synod office at cyndi.berg@spas-elca.org.

Calendar

Look for more events and information at www.spas-elca.org

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders

Saturday, February 22, 2014

8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran

2499 Helen Street North
North St. Paul

A day of **workshops** to address
the nuts and **bolts** of
Leadership
in your congregation

More information and register at
www.spas-elca.org/toolkit

January

Annual Conference on Liturgy: The Psalms: Humanity at Full Stretch

Jan. 10-11, Mount Olive, Minneapolis. The Conference on Liturgy provides the opportunity to explore contemporary theological topics of interest to parishes that value the historic yet varied forms of the work of the people of God. Dr. Don Saliers will be the conference keynote speaker. For more information, contact Mount Olive at 612.827.5919 or welcome@mountolivechurch.org.

■ Open Forum on Synod Profile

Jan. 11, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Gloria Dei, St. Paul. The Bishop Election Committee will present and lead a discussion of the synod profile—a document reflecting on the mission, needs, and priorities of this synod. More on [page 7](#).

Recharge

Jan. 11, Grace Fellowship, Brooklyn Park. At this one-day conference, youth ministry workers and volunteers will learn, be renewed, and be motivated to continue in ministry. Visit www.ministryrecharge.com for more information and to register.

■ Power and Boundaries: Ethics in Ministry

Jan. 16, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Roseville Lutheran, Roseville. Facilitated by Bishop Peter Rogness and the Rev. Susan Miller, the training will include theological content; power and gender issues and appropriate boundaries for rostered leaders; self-care and vulnerability; and a review of the synod's response procedure for accusations of sexual boundary violations. [See inset on page 2](#) for details.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to Preach at Christ the King

Jan. 19, Christ the King, New Brighton. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will preach at three services on Sunday, Jan. 19 (8:30, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m.) as a part of Christ the King's Local Mission Partner Sunday. [Read the complete press release](#) (PDF) for additional information.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to Visit Luther Seminary

Jan. 20, Luther Seminary, St. Paul. Luther Seminary welcomes Presiding Bishop Eaton to observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The day includes worship, food, conversations, and presentations. All events are free and open to the public. More information including a schedule of events can be found at www.luthersem.edu.

■ Multicultural Conversations: How Do We Build Bridges across Race, Class and Culture?

Jan. 25, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon, Luther Seminary Chapel, St. Paul. Congregations are invited to send teams of people to learn about resources for engaging in multicultural conversations. "One Body, Many Members," a web resource from the ELCA will be introduced. [More details on page 8](#).

February

■ Conference Assemblies

Feb. 8, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon, St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi. Voting members at the conference assemblies will be nominating potential candidates for the next synodical bishop. More at www.spas-elca.org/conferenceassemblies.

■ Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Relationships

Feb. 20, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., St. Stephen's, West St. Paul. This seminar for children, youth and family (CYF) ministry professionals and volunteers will address the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy, professional ministry boundaries. Church professionals working with CYF ministry, both paid and unpaid, are strongly encouraged to attend. [Register](#) (Google Form) by Feb. 13.

■ Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders

Feb. 22, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., St. Mark's, North St. Paul. A training event for congregational leaders that features extended conversation with Bishop Rogness, networking opportunities with leaders from congregations of this synod, and workshops specific to leadership matters and concerns. Visit www.spas-elca.org/toolkit for list of workshops and to register.

April

■ Jump Start Your Stewardship

April 5, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon, Christ the King, Bloomington. The 2014 Jump Start Your Stewardship event entitled, "Change for the Church," will feature three speakers including Mary Kay DuChene, Greg Meyer, and Grace Duddy. If you have questions regarding this event or stewardship in your congregation, contact the Rev. Susan Miller at susan.miller@spas-elca.org.

■ Candidate Forum

April 26, 9:00-11:00 a.m., Incarnation, Shoreview. One of two opportunities to meet the candidates for bishop in advance of the May election. Profiles of the candidates will be published in March, and congregations will be invited to submit questions for the candidates at the open forum on the synod profile in January. Details will be published at www.spas-elca.org/bishopselection2014 as they become available.

■ Candidate Forum

April 28, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Augustana, West St. Paul. Second of two opportunities to meet the candidates for bishop in advance of the May election.

Coming Up...

■ Synod Assembly

May 16-17, Prince of Peace, Burnsville. Voting members at the synod assembly will elect the next bishop for the Saint Paul Area Synod. [More on page 3](#).

Ascension Day Breakfast

May 29, 9:00-11:30 a.m., Augsburg College, Minneapolis. This annual gathering for CYF Ministry leaders in the Saint Paul Area and Minneapolis Area Synods will feature Rozella White, program director for Young Adult Ministry in the ELCA, as keynote speaker.

■ Sponsored by the Saint Paul Area Synod

Share your event!

Have an event with synodwide appeal that you would like to share on the calendar? Send details to Christine Fifield at christine.fifield@spas-elca.org.

Connections

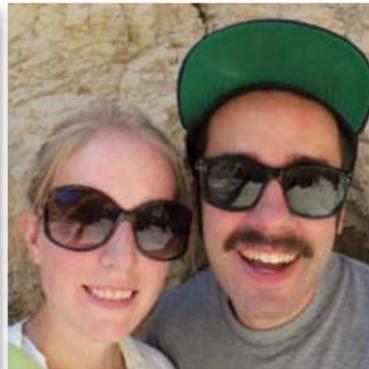
with the ELCA churchwide and other partners in ministry and mission



Jenna Bergeson



Colleen Peterson



Chelsey and Nate Cray

Continued from page 1

Minnesota Roots

For Bergeson, these faith-challenging conversations have transformed into some of her most valued experiences. She says:

“One thing I love dearly about Malaysia ...is the openness of interfaith dialogue, struggles, and doubt. No matter your faith practice, people are willing to talk about God, and how God seems active or inactive in this world. I’ve talked with people who have more faith than I have ever witnessed; people who believe in something but don’t quite know what it could be, and everything in between.

“I appreciate everyone’s willingness to be vulnerable, because we all have doubts and it is beautiful to share in the struggle amongst fellow doubters—as well as believers. I am called here to listen and live within the stories of those around me; the story I carry, the story of the other, and story of God. They all cross and weave together in ways unexpected and unbelievable. We all share the same story somewhere in the pattern and I give thanks for sharing those stories with my families across the world, from Saint Paul, Minnesota to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.”

Are you ready to be changed?

Also serving in Malaysia, Colleen Peterson of Faith, Forest Lake, feels the call to listen and be present with people and their stories. “Although most people ask what I am doing in Malaysia, my time here has been more about simply being with people,” Peterson says. “While there are things I have ‘done,’ the majority of my time has been spent listening, asking questions, and observing the lives of people I have met or encounter any given day.”

As part of her work, Peterson volunteers with a Christian non-profit in Kuala Lumpur called Malaysian Care, www.malaysiancare.org. Within this organization, she has felt most called to their rural and urban development unit and will spend the next eight months working with refugee youth, children living in urban poor communities, and rural indigenous farming communities.

It is among these groups of people that Peterson has experienced some of her most challenging and enjoyable moments. “I love moments of connection with people, whether that’s having tea with a client from work, laughing with refugee children, or exchanging smiles with the woman I buy fruit from many mornings. I enjoy these moments the most because they remind me that it’s the small things we do each day in interacting with others that make a difference in the world.”

In a recent conversation with one of the department directors at Malaysian Care, Peterson observes that this type of work is about much more than serving others. She states:

“[He] recalled the excitement and attitude new staff have coming into social justice work. He explained that while many staff enter this type of work proclaiming ‘I’m ready to serve!’ he explained that we should instead be asking, ‘Are you ready to be changed?’ Even in the short time that I was been in Malaysia and volunteering at this organization, I can easily see how this type of work and experience changes the individual much more than anything one can give back.”

Warmth on the West Bank

Married in 2012, the Crays serve together on the West Bank primarily as volunteer music and English teachers in two schools affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELC-JHL). “We are grateful to share our gifts in this new culture,” says Nate, a former youth director at St. Andrew’s, Mahtomedi, and worship leader at Hosanna, Forest Lake, “but, much more, we are grateful to learn from our new community.”

While the Crays enjoy learning with people at the schools and in the markets, living in the West Bank has its challenges, especially with adjusting to a new culture. They say:

“While Palestine is very western and modern in its technology, fashion, and transportation, it is still eastern and traditional in its values. We have to work hard to

remember not to cross our legs in church, not to sit next to the opposite gender on the bus, and not to refuse anything we’re offered. Things that are deemed scandalous or rude in one society may not be perceived that way in another. For the most part, our Palestinian friends are very forgiving of us in our cultural errors. For this, we are so grateful!”

Despite the challenges of living in a new culture, they are continually empowered by the warmth and radical hospitality of their community in Jerusalem and the West Bank. They add:

“We’ve met so many kind and gentle folks here, including our host family, colleagues at school, favorite shopkeepers, fellow members of our congregation, and even strangers on the street who are sometimes riding donkeys...It’s very common to meet someone for the first time, and then instantly be invited over to his or her house for a meal and to meet the rest of the family.

“To say that the people of this culture are hospitable is an understatement. It’s difficult to describe the warm and inviting nature of this culture. Because of this, it’s hard for us to believe that Mary and Joseph, so long ago, had no place to stay but a meager stable. We know our friends and neighbors here would have been as welcoming to the expecting couple as they have been to us.”

Continue to follow their stories

If you’d like to continue following the journeys of Katie, Jenna, Colleen, Chelsey, Nate, and other YAGMs with roots in this synod, visit their service blogs which have been listed below.

If you’d like to know more about YAGM or donate to the program, please visit www.elca.org/yagm.

Jenna Bergeson *Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia*
Luther Seminary, St. Paul and Christ Lutheran, Blaine
thecloudedview.blogspot.com

Delia Bingea *Malaysia*
Christ Lutheran, Lake Elmo
deliainmalaysia.blogspot.com

Chelsey and Nate Cray *Jerusalem/West Bank*
Hosanna, Forest Lake
crayjourney.tumblr.com

Emily Kimball *London, England (UK)*
Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley
barefootandgrowing.wordpress.com

Katie Menke *Corrientes, Argentina*
Our Saviour’s, Hastings
overflowingandeverflowingjoy.wordpress.com

Colleen Peterson *Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
Faith, Forest Lake
colleenrpeterson.wordpress.com

Presiding Bishop Eaton plans to visit Minnesota



This January, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will be visiting the Saint Paul Area Synod to preach and participate in events at Christ the King Lutheran Church, New Brighton, and Luther Seminary.

Christ the King will be host Presiding Bishop Eaton on Sunday, Jan. 19, as a part of Christ the King's Local Mission Partner Sunday. Eaton will be preaching at all three morning services (8:30, 9:30, and 10:45 a.m.). The Sunday celebrates Christ the King's partnerships with other ELCA congregations in the Greater Twin Cities metro area.

On Monday, Jan. 20, the seminary will welcome Presiding Bishop Eaton to campus to observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day. A team of students, staff, and faculty are preparing a day filled with uplifting worship, delicious food, interesting conversations, and meaningful presentations. It will be a day to reflect on the significance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s influence, as well as the importance of the civil rights movement for people around the world.

The day's events include worship, a community meal, and panel discussion. For complete details, visit www.luthersem.edu. All events are free and open to the public. No RSVP is required.

Have you read *Seasonings of the Synod* lately?

There is a wealth of resources around hunger and opportunities to become involved in the fight against hunger locally and around the world. Vernita Kennen currently blogs about these resources and opportunities on the synod hunger blog, *Seasonings for the Synod* at www.spas-elca.org/seasoningsofthesynod.

This blog is updated semi-monthly so be sure to check the synod website, social media, and News and Events emails regularly. If there is a particular topic or concern you'd like to learn about, please send your suggestions to Vernita at dvkennan@aol.com.

Mount Carmel Endowment Fund distributed for ministry among people in poverty

The synod council voted in November to approve the recommendation on the distribution of \$6,000 from the Mount Carmel Endowment Fund in the following manner:

This fund has approximately \$10,000 available for annual distribution to congregations engaged in ministry with the poor. A total of \$4,000 was distributed in March to support Shobi's Table, St. Paul, leaving \$6,000 remaining for this year. The synod staff recommends the funds be distributed with grants of \$2,000 to each of these three ministries:

- **Galilee Lutheran Church, Roseville.** They have developed a Wednesday evening outreach to neighborhood children and families, called GLOW. They have a meal together and some programming for families, and they are exploring ways to expand this ministry. Funds will be used to purchase food and supplies to sustain this ministry.
- **Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Circle Pines.** They have developed an outreach ministry to help preschool children, called Jump Start School Readiness, which they run with the local schools. In addition to purchasing classroom materials, the funds could be used for paid child care and parenting materials, so that moms can get together during class and other times to support each other, learn new skills, and prepare learning materials to use at home.
- **Open Hands-Midway, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Paul.** This ministry provides food, clothing, and support for struggling individuals and families in the Midway neighborhood of St. Paul. Funds will be used to supplement the food they receive from Second Harvest.

The Mount Carmel Endowment Fund is one of four endowment funds that have been established to provide an avenue for giving to support specific arenas of ministry that have been supported generously over the years by congregations and individuals of the Saint Paul Area Synod. Grants are awarded with particular priority given to ministries that build relationships with persons living in poverty through a connection with the life and people of a congregation or group of congregations working together. This fund was established from the sale and dissolution of Mount Carmel Lutheran Church on the East Side to continue ministry in low-income areas of the synod.



This past year, Open Hands Midway had 800 people attend their annual Lawn Party. Some 500 backpacks filled with school supplies were given away (donated by First American Title Insurance Company) as well as food, clothing, household items, and furniture items. Photo courtesy of Open Hands Midway.

Additional synod endowment funds

An endowment secures, strengthens, and extends the long term viability of ministry by providing an ongoing stream of income for years to come. Four Saint Paul Area Synod endowment funds have been established to support mission starts, global mission, theological education, and ministry with people in poverty. These include the Lowell Erdahl, Iringa, Seminary Support, and Mount Carmel Endowment Funds.

The financial support that will be generated by these endowments will enable our synod to maintain current effective ministries and to initiate new ministries in response to needs as they arise in the future—whether it is supporting new leaders, seeking to meet the immediate needs of those living in poverty, launching new congregations, or walking shoulder to shoulder with our partners in the Iringa Diocese. All of these efforts build up the body of Christ here in this synod and around the world! For specific information on each of the funds, please visit www.spas-elca.org/stewardship.

If you are considering a gift to any of these endowment funds, you are encouraged to seek advice in putting together a plan that is best suited to your personal situation. The Saint Paul Area Synod endowment funds are all administered with the assistance of the [ELCA Foundation](http://www.elca.org). The staff of the ELCA Foundation are available to work with you and your attorney, financial advisor, or accountant to facilitate a charitable gift that benefits the endowment fund and fits your individual needs and motivations. For planning assistance or more information, contact Becky Palmgren, ELCA Foundation regional gift planner, at 763.464.3584 or Rebecca.Palmgren@elca.org.

Invite your voting members to participate in the process

Preparation for the election of a new bishop at the Saint Paul Area Synod assembly in May continues with two important upcoming events:

Open Forum on the Synod Profile

Saturday, January 11, from 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Gloria Dei, St. Paul

www.spas-elca.org/events/open-forum-synod-profile

Conference Assemblies

Saturday, February 8, from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi

www.spas-elca.org/conferenceassemblies



At the **January 11 open forum on the synod profile**, the Bishop Election Committee (BEC) will present and lead a discussion of the synod profile—a document reflecting current demographics of the synod and the mission, needs, and priorities identified in conversations with congregations and synod leaders during the mission exploration phase of the election process. The profile will serve as an important guide both to potential bishop candidates and to those who will participate in the election. The profile is available for download at www.spas-elca.org/bishopselection2014. At this event, the BEC will also invite participants to submit questions for the candidate forums to be held in April. See the list of bishop election events at www.spas-elca.org/bishopselection2014/events.

At the **February 8 conference assemblies**, each of the six synod conferences will nominate up to three potential candidates for the office of bishop. Voting members must be present and registered by 9:30 a.m. in order to participate in the first (nominating) ballot. Each congregation is allocated a number of voting lay members for the synod assembly in May, based on congregational membership (see voting allocation chart below), and twice that many voting lay members for the conference assemblies in February. Congregations are urged to select their voting members early so they can attend the January 11 forum on the synod profile, participate in conference assemblies, and become fully prepared for the bishop election in May. If you are reading *FaithLink* electronically, you may download the voting member allocation chart below. This chart can also be found at www.spas-elca.org/conferenceassemblies.

[Download the 2014 Voting Member Allocation Chart \(PDF\)](#)

If you have questions about either of these events or about the bishop election process, or if you would like a member of the BEC to meet with your congregation or council, please contact the BEC at spas.bec.2014@gmail.com.

[Upcoming training for Children, Youth, and Family professionals and volunteers](#)

Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Relationships

Thursday, February 20, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 1575 Charleton Street, West St. Paul

Church professionals have the privilege of being invited into a variety of relationships, often at times of stress and vulnerability. We function best with others when our own relationships are healthy and our boundaries are clear. The morning session will address the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy, professional ministry boundaries. Following lunch, we will look at boundaries from the perspective of personal wellness: how we establish and maintain authentic relationships and deal with issues of integrity, intimacy, and transparency.

Church professionals working with children, youth and family ministry, both paid and unpaid, are strongly encouraged to attend. Rostered church leaders are expected to attend a boundaries workshop at least once every five years.

Schedule for the day

8:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee

8:45 a.m. Boundaries—A Sacred Trust presented by John Hulden, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Support, Minneapolis Area Synod and Susan Miller, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Life and Mission, Saint Paul Area Synod

11:45 a.m. Lunch on your own

1:00 p.m. Relationships—Integrity, Intimacy and Transparency presented by Karen Stevensen, MSW, LICSW, MDiv

Register by February 13

Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$20 per person. Checks can be mailed to the Saint Paul Area Synod, 105 University Avenue W, St. Paul, MN 55103 or brought to the workshop.

Register at www.spas-elca.org/events/healthyboundaries.

NEWS ABOUT Calls

In Interim

Atonement, New Brighton, *pastor*

Christ, St. Paul, *pastor*

Christ the Servant, Vadnais Heights, *pastor*

Faith, Forest Lake, *senior pastor*

First, Taylor's Falls, *pastor*

Galilee, Roseville, *pastor*

Hmong Central, St. Paul, *pastor*

Holy Cross, Oakdale, *senior pastor*

Lakeview, Maplewood, *pastor*

Lutheran Church of Peace, Maplewood, *pastor*

Our Savior's, Stillwater, *senior pastor*

Roseville, Roseville, *senior pastor*

Spring Lake, North Branch, *pastor*

St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, *associate pastor*

Zion, Chisago City, *pastor*

Zion, St. Paul, *pastor*

Call Committee Active

Christus Victor, Apple Valley, *associate pastor*

Grace, St. Paul, *pastor*

Highview Christiania, Farmington, *pastor*

Hosanna, Forest Lake, *senior pastor*

Roseville, Roseville, *associate pastor*

St. Paul, Stillwater, *senior pastor*

St. Paul-Reformation, St. Paul, *pastor*

Trinity, Lindstrom, *part-time associate pastor*

Ordinations, Consecration, and Commissioning

The Rev. Stephanie Vos, ordained December 13, associate pastor, Trinity, Stillwater

Calls Accepted

The Rev. Sharon Baglyos, interim pastor, Zion, St. Paul

The Rev. Brent Erler, pastor, Family of Christ, Lakeville

The Rev. Donald Fulton, interim pastor, Christ, St. Paul

The Rev. Peter Hanson, senior pastor, Christ the King, New Brighton

The Rev. Jennifer Mason, pastor, Light of the World, Farmington

The Rev. Leesa Soderlind, associate pastor, Good Shepherd, Inver Grove Heights

The Rev. Rebecca Thurman, interim pastor, St. Paul, Stillwater

The Rev. Jim Weckwerth, interim associate pastor, St. Anthony Park, St. Paul

Serving Interim Contract

The Rev. James Barsch, interim pastor, Hosanna, Forest Lake

The Rev. Roger Hardy, interim pastor, Faith, Forest Lake

Retirements

Audrey Fairchild-Ehm, AiM, effective Nov. 1, 2013

Christy Olson, AiM, effective Dec. 31, 2013

The Rev. Keith Olstad, effective Dec. 1, 2013

Deaths

The Rev. Paul Edstrom, Nov. 27, 2013

The Rev. Robert Grendahl, Sept. 16, 2013

The Rev. Marvin Palmquist, Nov. 30, 2013

The Rev. Russell Sanoden, Nov. 27, 2013

Prayers

January

Week of January 5

Abiding Savior, Mounds View; All Saints, Eagan; Alaska Synod and Bishop Shelley Wickstrom; Northwest Washington and Bishop B. Kirby Unti; The Rev. Richard E. Andersen, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota; The Rev. Paul A. Baglyos, Region 3-ELCA

Week of January 12

All Saints, Cottage Grove; Amazing Grace, Inver Grove Heights; Arlington Hills, St. Paul; Southwestern Washington Synod and Bishop Richard Jaech; Marie Baker AiM, Mendota Heights Church UCC

Week of January 19

Atonement, New Brighton; Augustana, West St. Paul; Beaver Lake, Maplewood; Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod and Bishop Martin Wells; The Rev. Christopher Z. Beckman, Ebenezer Ridges Care Center

Week of January 26

Bethesda, Inver Grove Heights; Bethlehem, Bayport; Oregon Synod and Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke; The Rev. Norman Belland, HealthEast Care System/St. Joseph's Hospital

February

Week of February 2

Bethlehem, St. Paul; Calvary, Stanchfield; Montana Synod and Bishop Jessica Crist; Sierra Pacific Synod and Bishop Mark Holmerud; The Rev. Eyglo Bjarnadottir, Hazelden Foundation; The Rev. Philip N. Boe, Health Partners Hospice of the Lakes Program

Week of February 9

Chisago Lake, Center City; Christ, Lake Elmo; Southwest California and Bishop R. Guy Erwin; Pacifica Synod and Bishop Murray Finck; Miriam R. (Mim) Campbell AiM, Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley; Pamela A. Carlson AiM, Mount Calvary, Eagan

Week of February 16

Christ, Marine on St. Croix; Christ, St. Paul; Christ the King, New Brighton; Grand Canyon Synod and Bishop Stephen Talmage; The Rev. Karen Cherwien, Intrepid USA Hospice

Week of February 23

Christ the King, White Bear Lake; Christ the Servant, Vadnais Heights; Christiania, Lakeville; Rocky Mountain Synod and Bishop James Gonia; Patricia J. Derry AiM, Gloria Dei, St. Paul

NEXT DEADLINE February 1

The deadline for the March issue is February 1. The mailing date is February 28. If you have questions, contact Christine Fifield at 651.224.4313 or at christine.fifield@spas-elca.org.

Attention ELCA-primary plan members

It's time to take the 2014 Health Assessment

Portico Benefit Services continues to offer us the opportunity to earn a two percent discount on ELCA health contributions this year. In 2013, we collectively saved \$42,000! Seventy-three percent of eligible members completed the health assessment. In 2014, let's make it 100 percent!

Each congregation and organization in our synod will receive a two percent discount on health contributions if 65 percent of our eligible ELCA-primary plan members complete the confidential Mayo Clinic Health Assessment by April 30.

It's up to you!

If you have ELCA-primary health coverage, this savings depends on your participation. Take the assessment January 1-April 30 on the EmbodyHealth web portal: www.elcaforwellness.org. When you complete the assessment, you will also earn \$150 in your personal wellness account to offset out-of-pocket medical costs. If you are retired and have Medicare-primary health coverage, you have access to the health assessment and online tools, but your participation will not count toward the two percent discount.

Encourage others to take it!

The assessment is confidential and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Your most recent health statistics are helpful to have on hand while you take the assessment, but they are not required. Congregants, remind your pastors and church staff to take it. It will save your congregation money on health benefits!

Take it now...and we won't bug you later

The first half of 2014 will include a massive amount of important information from this office regarding bishop election and other synod-wide events. If you'd like one less item in your email inbox, take the assessment and notify Christine Fifield, communications specialist at the Saint Paul Area Synod office, so your name can be removed from the email reminder list.

Now you know why and how, now it's time to take it! If you're reading FaithLink electronically, click the button to finish your assessment and help us earn the two-percent discount.



Understanding your health benefits can be complicated. Taking the health assessment is not.

Take the assessment today for yourself, your congregation, and your synod.

MULTICULTURAL CONVERSATIONS: How do we build bridges across race, culture, and class?

Congregations seeking to connect with their changing communities are invited to send teams of people to learn about resources for engaging in multicultural conversations.

Saturday, Jan. 25, 2014, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

**Luther Seminary Chapel,
1490 Fulham Street, St. Paul**

After opening comments by Bishop Peter Rogness, Saint Paul Area Synod, and Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod, we will be introduced to *One Body, Many Members*, an ELCA web resource designed to equip congregations to reach out and fully welcome persons whose race, culture, and class is different than their own. Judith Roberts, ELCA Program Director for Racial Justice Ministries, will guide the conversation. Bring your computer for this interactive session.

Sign-up today!

Please register your team at www.eventbrite.com/e/multicultural-conversations-tickets-8447884851.

Registration is free of charge. For more information, contact Paul Erickson in the Saint Paul Area Synod office at paul.erickson@elca.org.



CALL Assist

Clergy, rostered leaders, and their families are sometimes the last ones to reach out for help with their own problems. But you don't have to wait until things fall completely apart before you ask for help. **Assist**, the employee assistance program of Fairview Health Services, can help. To speak confidentially with an **Assist** counselor about issues of personal or professional concern, call 612.672.2195. The phone is answered 24 hours a day.