

## 2010 Reports of the Synod Boards

### BOARD FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The board wants to acknowledge and thank those directly involved in the committees organized under the Board for Congregational Life. These include: Worship, Education and Family Ministry, Youth Ministry, Evangelism, and Stewardship. The board has been working to improve communication with the committees. To that end, each committee has at least one board member who will function as a liaison between board and committee. For the 2010 Synod Assembly the board is sponsoring a Faith Stories project. Assembly participants are invited to share and record a story of when God was at work through the hands of an individual or congregation. Summary reports from committees follow:

Synod Worship Committee: Much of the work of this committee centers around assembly worship. Assembly participants will experience the fruits of the Worship Team's labor as they gather for worship at the assembly. This team puts in many hours of work to ensure that worship is a meaningful and inspiring experience.

Education and Family Ministry: This team is a busy and creative group of pastors and lay leaders that likes to think out of the box. Always thinking, how can we teach equip people to pass on their faith to others in our everyday lives? Last fall the team hosted two ConFest events in which approximately 400 confirmation age youth, leaders and pastors gathered at St. John in LeMars and Trinity Lutheran in Avoca. The evening's theme was "TLK N 2 God" and focused on prayer, styles of prayer and the many different things we should pray for. This was a time for worship, discussion, fellowship and a chance to meet Bishop Last. New this year the team is hosting a grandparent conference. A chance for older adults to come together and celebrate their call of being a faith filled grandparent. They will also share ways to connect with their grandchildren near or far and how to participate in being a volunteer grandparent. The speaker is Marilyn Sharpe of Marilyn Sharpe Ministries from the Minneapolis area. The team will continue to look at ways to reach out to all ages equipping them to be faith mentors for others.

Youth Ministry: The LYO Council is a vibrant group of youth and adults energized and ready for planning, leading and sharing in events that will engage youth and bring them closer in their faith walk with God. Many participated last summer from a day with worship and fun at Adventureland to a week in New Orleans. Last summer the synod hosted a bus trip, in which approximately 300 youth and adults from around the synod participated in, to the national youth gathering in New Orleans entitled Jesus, Justice & Jazz. All those on the bus trip along with other groups from the Western Iowa Synod experienced a week of spectacular worship, interactive events, service work, learning and a lot of fun! Over 37,000 people attended the national youth gathering last July. Thank you to Amanda DenBeste, our national youth gathering coordinator, for all of her work to make this a great experience for all participants. The people of New Orleans are grateful for our presence there.

In the fall our Junior High Youth Gathering was held at Twin Lakes Christian Center near Manson. Approximately 155 youth and adults from the Western Iowa Synod attended this event which was entitled "Reach Out". Our speaker/musician was Shawn Smith who shared with us his excitement and faith stories of sharing the Good News of God's grace in Christ to others, even around the world. Everyone participated in service projects for the camp and community as a way of reaching out to others. It was a great event for all. The next junior high gathering is set for November 5th & 6th with Peder Eide as speaker and musician. This will be a great event you won't

want to miss. The senior high gathering had to be canceled this year due to lack of interest; perhaps due to the scheduling on New Years weekend. Another will be planned in 2010, watch for further details. The LYO Council is always trying to think of new ideas and events to get the youth of our synod involved in the ministry of the synod. Thank you to those congregations who support these events and encourage the youth of their congregation to attend.

The Evangelism Committee: changed its approach to providing energy and information for congregations this year. In the past they gathered people from all around the synod to a single location to hold a School of Evangelism. The committee thought it would be more convenient and cost effective to offer a one day events regionally throughout the synod. The first of the regional offerings happened at Badger Lutheran and more are being planned, possibly in the Sioux City and Council Bluffs areas.

The Stewardship Task force: organized a series of Money Leadership events for congregations funded by an ELCA grant. 5 gatherings here held in the spring of 2009 throughout the synod. The fall conference gatherings were an opportunity to learn about the new WIS staff member relating to stewardship. 12 meetings were held and information about Growing Stewards was shared. The task force is entering into a time of restructuring and will be looking for new members who have a heart for helping WIS members and congregations grow as stewards.

## **BOARD FOR MINISTRY**

The members of the board are: Conf. 1 – Bill Peters, Conf. 2 – Pr. Peter Maisenbach, Conf. 3 – Pr. Luther Thoresen, Conf. 4 – Diana Hayungs, Conf. 5 – Pr. Jean Morse, Conf. 6 – vacant, Conf. 7 – vacant, Conf. 8 – vacant, Conf. 9 – vacant, Conf. 11 – Dave Lindgren, Conf. 12 – Mary Lou Hansen, Conf. 13 – Pr. George Hooper, Synod Council Rep. – Robert Jacobson, and Synod Rep. – Pr. Danette Johns. The Board for Ministry works with the following committees and ministries:

Candidacy – This committee walks with seminary students and lay people as they journey toward roster in the ELCA. The committee met four times to conduct interviews and one time on an All Committee Day to evaluate the committee's work. A retreat was held in September at Lutheran Lakeside Bible Camp.

First Call Theological Education (FCTE) – This committee helps first call pastors to foster healthy habits in three areas: Spiritual Life, Collegiality, and Continuing Education. The new first call pastors met in the fall to get an overview of the FCTE program. A retreat will be held later in May.

Spirituality Retreats – Two retreats were held this year for rostered leaders in our synod. The retreats include various spiritual disciplines, worship, rest and collegial support. Retreats were held in October at the Creighton University Retreat Center and in January at Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp. Our October topic was "Pilgrimage" and our January topic was "The Enneagram." Our May 2010 retreat will be at Twin Lakes Christian Center and will include centering prayer, sacred story telling, praying with colors, and the telling of Bible stories.

Lay School of Ministry (LSM) – The Lay School of Ministry provides opportunities for personal faith growth in the lives of lay people through academics, study of the Bible, small groups, honing of ministry skills, and worship. Our two-year class finished its work in May and will be recognized at this synod assembly. The Gospel of Luke was offered as a continuing education class. A class on

the theology of Martin Luther will be offered in the fall. We will also begin a new two-year class. We are beginning to explore the possibility of offering the two-year class on-line in the fall of 2011.

Spouses Retreat – We had hoped to have a spouses retreat in April but did not have the numbers to make it viable. We will be looking for other ways to support spouses in their unique ministry. Colleen Last will gather the spouses for Saturday lunch at the synod assembly.

Call Process – Call process work seeks to match the gifts and desires of pastors with the gifts and needs of congregations. This is a great time for synod staff to connect with congregations through the work of the call committee.

Rural Immersion – In January five students from Luther Seminary spent five days in the Western Iowa Synod. This experience gives congregation members the opportunity to teach about the joys and challenges of small town and rural life and ministry.

Wellness – In March we offered a Living Well Retreat for rostered leaders. Phil Blom from the Board of Pensions led us in a retreat that focused on the Wholeness Wheel. We hope to offer such a retreat each year. Please see the wellness display to see other wellness activities that will be offered in the next year for rostered leaders.

Boundary Workshops – In November the board will offer boundary workshops. The day time offering will be for rostered leaders and the evening offering will be for lay leaders.

## **BOARD FOR MISSION**

The Board for Mission of the Western Iowa Synod, ELCA works through various committees and agencies to further the work of God within the synod and to the ends of the world. The following groups report their work for 2009:

Outreach Committee: The Outreach Committee worked this year to secure continued funding for New Life Lutheran in Sergeant Bluffs. There was some disappointment when it was learned that the grant for 2010 would be significantly less than 2009, due to the ELCA's Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) unit needing to cut their allocations for mission congregations. The WIS committee also provided guidance to St John's, in Carroll, and a Partnership grant was awarded from EOCM to help that congregation begin the Transformation/Renewal process.

Discovering Hope: Rostered and lay members from the Western Iowa and the Southwestern Minnesota synods met at Our Savior's Lutheran in Jackson, MN for this year's Discovering Hope event. Our theme was "Demonstrating Hope" and our speaker was Pr. Mark Yackel-Juleen, parish pastor and co-director of Shalom Hill Farm near Windom, MN. After this event the planning team decided that we have saturated the synod with Discovering Hope events, so this was the final one. We will continue to look for ways to help small town and rural congregations be vital places for mission and ministry.

ELCA World Hunger and Global Mission Team: The WIS committees for World Hunger and Global Mission came to the realization that much of what the church is doing in these two areas are closely related, so the synod groups have banded together and are now known as the WIS Global Mission/Hunger Team. Its goal is to energize the WIS to come together to make a global and local difference. Their upcoming efforts will focus on the World Hunger Appeal, the ELCA

HIV/AIDS Strategy, and the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, all of these will be represented at the 2010 WIS Assembly.

Tour de Revs, three ELCA pastors rode a bamboo bicycle built for three in every ELCA synod to raise awareness and encourage gifts for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. They came to Storm Lake, IA in August 2009. Over fifty members of synod congregations formed a "Rev guard" and rode into the city along with the Revs. Live praise music, food, time by the lake, and a program on hunger issue by the Revs made for a celebration. Almost \$12,000 was given from the synod to allow the ELCA to fulfill its granting plans. For more information or questions contact Pr. Danette Johns, Asst. to the Bishop, at [wisdj@wisynod.org](mailto:wisdj@wisynod.org), or 712-732-4968 ext 448.

Companion Synod: hatua kwa hatua/step by step highlights 2009

Well Project: Much work has been done to refurbish the newly-acquired well-drilling rig, find and prepare a vehicle to pull the rig, acquire a wide myriad of donated supplies and tools, test out the equipment, and prepare it for shipping to Tanzania! Once it arrives, the WIS Well Team will travel to Tanzania to orientate the Tanzanian well-drilling crew on its operation and maintenance. Whereas the old equipment could potentially drill a well every 2-3 weeks, this equipment could drill a well every day or so. We anticipate this change in equipment to greatly enhance the efficiency and the capacity of our well drilling project. Approximate cost per well is \$3,000 and will service as many as 20,000 people. Deepening and expanding further the sustainability components of this project are on the horizon.

Center for agricultural development (CAD): After two years of planning and one successful pledge-based fundraising event, CAD is beginning to take shape. An organizational structure has been developed. Electricity and water are being brought to the diocesan buildings at Lupembe. Demonstration plots have been planted. Building renovation plans are being explored. Developing such a major project internationally and inter-culturally, however, is a daunting task. Several challenges have presented themselves. First and foremost, is the lack of an Executive Director to lead the project which is key and needs careful attention and selection. A good candidate has been identified through the Bavarian Mission Church, but needs to go through several selection processes before the position is finalized. We are hopeful that the selection of this person will be the first order of business for the CAD Board. From there, we hope to proceed with the development of curriculum and program delivery to the smallholder farmers. To date, over \$250,000 has been raised for this initiative!! While this is a great start and while the project seeks to include sustainable measures, on-going funding support continues to be needed.

Medical initiatives: Two medical personnel from the USA served at Ilembula Lutheran Hospital in the areas of vascular surgery and public health. Funding for the provision of industrial laundry equipment was completed. On-going scholarship support for Jason Mtokoma, who is in his third year of medical school and who will return to the Southern Diocese upon completion to serve as a doctor, has been maintained. Power surge protection has been supplied at the hospital. Next steps are to develop a planned preventative maintenance plan with the hospital to address the maintenance, repair, and replacement of valuable equipment for this vital institution. Additionally, there is a continual need for more medical equipment and supplies for Ilembula Lutheran Hospital.

Igumbilo lutheran girls secondary school: Enrollment is currently 350, moving toward a capacity of 500. Students continue to test well in national exams. Monthly, scholarship funding provides for

the neediest of students. Current efforts are underway to supply used and refurbished laptops to the school as well as a funding drive to supply the needed textbooks for this school.

Companion congregation relationships: There are currently 26 WIS congregations in relationship with Tanzanian parishes. These relationships exist and operate in a variety of modes and capacities. A Companion Congregation Workshop is being planned for the fall of 2010 to help deepen our understanding and expectations within these relationships, look at best practices, as well as to provide an opportunity for sharing and networking. One of our companion congregations will be traveling to Tanzania in May 2010 to visit their companion congregation which, upon their return, will hopefully be able to provide much insight into these relationships from the Tanzanian perspective. Three other congregations will visit their companions as part of the 2010 WIS Group Travelers in July and August of 2010, bringing their relationships to deeper, more personal levels. 2010 WIS Group Travel to Tanzania: Our 4th group of visitors will be traveling to Tanzania in July/August 2010 whereby they will learn about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and its various mission work activities, about Tanzanian culture, and about how our companion synod verse, “they may all be One...” (Jn 17:21a), joins us evermore closely together.

Other: Pr. Gabriel Nduye, Hatua Kwa Hatua Resident Coordinator, has gone to South Africa to obtain a Master’s Degree in Theology, Development and Evangelism which, upon his return, will render him considerably more effective in his work. In his absence, Pr. Seth Mlelwa will serve in this position. Anyone with questions in this area may contact Cindy Wells, Global Programs Coordinator at [wiscw@wisynod.org](mailto:wiscw@wisynod.org) or 712-732-4968 Ext. 441. Asante sana (Thank you very much) and mungu awabariki (God Bless You All) !!

#### Mission Endowment Committee:

The Mission Endowment Committee continued to work out an arrangement so that a Gift Planner might be available to members and congregations of the synod. A fund was established, and gifts were received, to underwrite some of the expenses of such a resource. Initial plans needed to be revised when it was learned that the ELCA Foundation, and its method of sponsoring gift planners, changed toward the end of 2009. It is hoped that a new system for the WIS will be in place by the fall of 2010.

The committee sought applications for distribution of the 2010 Mission Endowment grants. They recommended to the Synod Council that grants be made to the following: the WIS LYO to aid their fund raising to buy text books for Tanzania; the WIS Education Y&F to help fund the Grandparenting Conference; the Companion Synod medical student support program; Barnabas Uplift to replace monies cut from public sources; and continued support for New Life Lutheran Church, the synod’s mission congregation.