

## Evangelism — Share the Good News!

by Bishop Michael A. Last



The Western Iowa Synod School of Evangelism will soon be undertaking its second year on November 16-18, 2007, at St. John Lutheran Church in Carroll. This fine facility and the gracious hospitality from the people of St. John make an ideal setting for the work of training evangelists for the local congregation.

Our first year was a hit! But the steering committee has also learned a good deal from the first year's program. This year the School of Evangelism will be less theoretical and more user friendly and "hands on." Each student will conclude his or her studies with a detailed action plan for implementation tailored to the local context. Further, each student/congregational team will be able to take the skills and knowledge they have acquired from their training and offer themselves to their home church, or neighboring congregations interested in growth and outreach.

Additionally, we have learned the importance of pastoral accompaniment with congregation members who attend the School of Evangelism. While it is not required that the pastor come along with congregation members, our first year's experience has shown that if the pastor catches the spirit of the impact the training provides, lay people get a sense of the pastor's support in developing the action plan, as well as have the experience of being with their pastor in learning new skills. This is a win-win outcome for everyone involved.

The School of Evangelism is a two-weekend experience. Attending one weekend will not be particularly helpful. Dr. Craig Nesson from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque will be our theological resource for the November 16-18 session. Rev. David Daubert, currently the Director for Renewal of Congregations for the ELCA, will be facilitator/resource person for the second session weekend on February 15-17, 2008. Brochures with complete details are available from your pastor or by calling the synod office, 712-732-4968, or on the synod Web site, [www.wisynod.org](http://www.wisynod.org).

Finally, I wish to say that everywhere I go throughout this synod there is concern about aging membership and a diminishing vitality in the fervor of our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. The School of Evangelism can help, and is being watched by other synods who are also eager to address these same concerns in their settings. With each session under our belt, the steering committee hones the curriculum and enhances the experience, better preparing effective evangelists, creating a network of those passionate about sharing their faith, and strengthening the body of Christ in western Iowa. I urge to come on board by registering soon for an experience that may change your life.