

Northwest Network

Fall 2009

A quarterly newsletter of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - ELCA

From the Bishop . . .

It's a mess—a total mess! Boxes are strewn about, the garbage is overflowing because of the sorting and tossing, desks are in pieces, and staff is trying to do their regular work in the midst of it all. At the time of this writing, we are one day out from moving the synod office from Rice Lake to the lower level of the Welcome Center at Luther Park Bible Camp near Chetek. The heavy lifting remains.



During the move, bookkeeper Gail Brown packs her desk while she tries to keep up with her daily work.

Why move the synod office?

For two decades, the synod office has been in the same Rice Lake building. All of this time, we have been renting from a private landlord. The large, aging building, a small portion of which we occupied, had an increasing number of vacancies; so many that we have been concerned about the property's viability. Given this reality, we started to brainstorm about other potential locations that would meet our office needs, provide a long-term setting, and remain centrally located in the synod.

Some synods share space with Lutheran Social Services or an ELCA college or seminary, but we have no such complexes

on our synod territory with whom we could share space; nor are there church buildings in the center of the synod that have available office space.

Thankfully, Luther Park Bible Camp is located in the center of the synod and has under-utilized space on the lower level of the Welcome Center. With the approval of Luther Park's Board of Directors, the Synod Council, and the Synod Assembly, the decision was made to relocate. The new synod office is located on the lower level of the Welcome Center directly beneath the offices of Luther Park.



The Welcome Center at Luther Park Bible Camp, Chetek, provides a beautiful new setting for the synod offices.

The benefits of the move are numerous. The synod will experience a reduction in rent, and the camp will receive a new revenue stream. No longer will our rent be paid to a private building owner; it will be invested in outdoor ministry. Many who visit the synod office will be exposed to the Luther Park site in a way they probably would not otherwise. Some who visit will become more aware of outdoor ministry such that

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The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Walking together for the sake of mission in God's world

New address:

PO Box 107
944 24 1/4 Street
Chetek, WI 54728
715-859-6810

For up-to-date information about the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, visit

www.nwswi.org

"The benefits of the move are numerous. The synod will experience a reduction in rent, and the camp will receive a new revenue stream."

Bishop Duane Pederson

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Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world

Milestones, Moves & More

Milestones

Congratulations to . . .

Rev. Kathy Tulman on her ordination. She will serve Christ Lutheran in Somerset.

Rev. Kirsten Kellaher on her ordination. She was ordained at First Lutheran in New Richmond and called to serve at Calvary Lutheran in Rapid City, SD.

First Lutheran, Westboro, on 125 years of ministry.

Heather (Oberdeck) Kistner on her recent marriage to Michael Kistner.

Rev. DJ and Amanda Rasner on the adoption of their son, Solomon.
Rev. Larry Sturgis on his retirement.

Moves

Rev. Amy Fondroy Eich called to Joy Lutheran in Prescott.

Rev. Gail Sowell called to Peace and St. John's Lutheran in Edgar.

Rev. Jeanne Warner called to interim ministry at Augustana Lutheran in Cumberland.

Rev. Valerie Peterson called to interim ministry at English Lutheran in Ellsworth.

Rev. Norm Belland called to interim ministry at Luck Lutheran in Luck.

Rev. Lisa Shank transferred to the LaCrosse Area Synod.

& More

Our condolences to . . .

The family of Rev. Richard Gilbertson, former assistant to the bishop in our synod, who passed away July 21, 2009.
Rev. Daniel Olson on the loss of his wife, Michele.

Rev. Randy Olson on the loss of his father.

John Kurschner, synodically authorized minister, on the loss of his mother-in-law.

Mark your calendar . . .



Dec. 6 & 12

Feb. 14-15

Mar. 20

April 20-30

Open House/Mission Consultation at the new Synod office, Luther Park Bible Camp, Chetek

Winter Theological Event at the Plaza, Eau Claire

Walking Together: A Congregational Resource

Event at the Chippewa Falls Middle School

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Rev. Todd Iverson

Leadership Matters by Pastor Todd Iverson



“Encouragements to submission are inherently dangerous. Ask women. Ask slaves. Ask a colony of another nation. To submit is to yield to an authority other than yourself. By some

worldly calculus some may determine that this submissive relationship is worth the cost of personal freedom. This is not the way of Christ.

“A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.” Martin Luther

Christ came that we might have life (John 10:10) and joy (Phil. 4:4) and freedom (John 8:36). In Christ we are not even subject to sin anymore! Don't look back to the temptations of captivity; don't yearn for Egypt!

On the other hand, Jesus does have a thing or two to say about being great. The greatest and first look like slaves and servants (Mark 10:35-45); the first will be last and the last will be first (Matthew 19:30); the Messiah is one who washes the feet of his friends (John 13:1-20). So while we are free, we are also called to service.

“A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” Martin Luther

Which is it? It is, of course, both. One of Brother Martin's best works, *On the Freedom of a Christian*, in which the

paradoxical pair of quotes above appear, argues this point persuasively.

Dr. Alan Padgett adds to this conversation by pointing out that when it comes to pastors, we need to enter into submissive leadership. This is not the doormat submission that marks subjugation, suppression, or conquest. This is Christian submission that calls us to exercise our freedom and to use our gifts and time for the sake of the neighbor. “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another” (Gal. 5:13) and “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:1).

This last reference is dangerous because it has been used to subject wives to their husbands. Padgett argues that this an abuse of the text. Mutual submission has nothing to do with household hierarchy, but using one's own strengths to empower your spouse.

In servant leadership, we use our power to empower those whom we serve. The Center for Greenleaf Studies asks the question, “Do those we serve grow as people?” This voluntary, self-giving, working out of strengths, non-hierarchical form of submission is a great definition of Christian leadership. How are you leading today?

Pastor Todd Iverson, assistant to the bishop, guides congregations and pastors in the call process and works with the Leadership Support Commission to tend to the gifts of rostered and lay leaders throughout our synod.

Mission Moments

by Pastor Amy Odgren

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Fall is often the time that congregations turn their attention to stewardship initiatives. I pray for the day when we think of stewardship as a way that we respond to God's activity in our *daily* lives. With this in mind, stewardship is a way of *being*—it's year long—it's life long—it's about our whole being.

Pastor Todd Iverson, in the 2009 Winter issue of this publication, reminded us that *God has called us to be disciples.*

When disciples address the needs of the world, that is called mission. When disciples use the gifts that God has given them, that is called stewardship. Using the gifts that God has given us—that's a good description of what stewardship is all about. We can certainly share the gifts that God has given us throughout the year.

Yet it seems that we often have trouble "giving over" or sharing what we've been gifted with. After all, we live in a culture where the question "How much is enough?" never seems to get answered easily. "Twenty percent more than I have now" is a popular response. But it's easy to keep the cycle going. It's always going to take "twenty percent more." Every day we're told: "You don't have enough!" "What you have is fragile and could be gone at any moment!" "You have to go out and get more!" These messages come from a world focused on scarcity.

What does scarcity have to say about our understanding of our relationship with God? God is creator—we are God's creatures. How do we live in relationship with our creator?

Martin Luther reminds us in his explanation of the First Article of the Apostle's Creed "that God has created me and all that exists God daily and abundantly provides . . . all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life . . . out of pure and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!" It is in this relationship that we recognize that God has abundantly provided us with all that we need. Living in that abundance we share the blessings we have received. We use the gifts that God has given us.

If we focus on the scarcity, we never have enough. When we focus on God's abundant blessings, there is more than we can ever imagine. Recognizing God's abundant blessings, we can experience for ourselves what Paul was trying to convey in his message to the Philippians:

I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:11b-13

We have all been blessed by our amazing God of abundance. We can live and share abundantly knowing that we can "do all things through him who strengthens us."



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all of our camps will benefit. And, the stunning beauty of the camp will be a welcoming factor for all who visit the synod office.

My personal thanks to the synod support staff for the work and preparation in moving, the Luther Park volunteers who remodeled and readied the space, and the volunteers who helped move the synod office to our new location. We'd love to have you come and visit!

Volunteers guide one of many file cabinets down the stairs to the new synod office. It was a day of packing, heaving lifting, carrying and unpacking, but in the end everything (and everyone) arrived safely.





Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Visit us on the web:

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Liz Bartsch, administrative assistant, gets settled in her new workspace in the Luther Park Welcome Center..



Bishop Duane Pederson pauses to turn out the light for the last time at the former synod office in Rice Lake.