

God's Work, Our Ears?

That's right. While Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson isn't suggesting that the ELCA tagline be altered, he reminded assembly worshippers that our ears are the "birth canal of faith." For, as St. Paul writes, "*So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.*" Sowing seeds of hope begins with reminding ourselves that we are also the soil on which the seed of faith which is Jesus Christ has been sown.

Presiding Bishop Hanson illustrated the nature of the church by pointing us to the ELCA emblem—a cross at the center, surrounded by a diverse world. The word evangelical reminds us that at the heart of our identity is the good news of Jesus Christ. Assembly participants were challenged to think of themselves as everyday evangelists.

"The state of the ELCA depends on how the people of the ELCA are living out their faith in their daily life," according to Presiding Bishop Hanson. He also mentioned L.I.F.T. (Living into our Future Together), a study focused on how we sustain vibrant ministry and mission. This churchwide effort seeks deeper understanding on growing the body of Christ.

Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI)

Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, Director of LMI, explained that both synods are part of the pilot project for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. The "Nothing But Net" challenge raised \$3,506, as participants learned more about the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. In partnership with LCMS and LWR, the ELCA is working to combat this preventable and treatable disease.

[Don't] Grow up Bishops!

Assembly participants were treated to the collegial banter between Bishops Pederson and Justman. East Central participants enjoyed the picture that Bishop Pederson shared of Bishop Justman in full ecclesiastical regalia. Northwest Wisconsin participants now have a new nickname given to our bishop by Bishop Justman—"snooky wookems." Sorry Bishop, this one just might stick!



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

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - ELCA
2010 Synod Assembly Summary



McNeal Focuses on the Missional Church

"I'm not here to help you *do* church better because [that's] not going to matter. We need to *be* church better," according to keynote speaker, Reggie McNeal. He emphasized that we are blessed to be a blessing. **McNeal makes it a practice to ask others, "How can I ask God to bless you?"**

Taking his cue from the stories of God's people both in scripture and in his life experiences, McNeal proposes that church is not an *it*, but a *who*. So what/who is the missional church? For McNeal, the missional church is the people of God partnering with him on his redemptive mission in the world. God has a mission and we are invited into that mission.

"Think of the church as an airport . . . we are not the destination. We play a role, we are connectors to get people into life. Life is where people want to land." Shifting from an internal focus on getting people in the pews to an external focus on actively being the people of God in our communities is a key component of missional congregations. As we go out, we will encounter God who is already in the streets.

McNeal also suggests that we "change the scorecard" by focusing on people development, on spiritual formation, rather than on the number of people in attendance; and that missional leaders need to shift from being church-centric to being kingdom-centric. Finally, he suggests that for missional change to occur, we need to dare to go first, face our fears, and answer God's invitation to join in God's continuing work in the world.

Good Soil

Over 300 assembly goers also participated in the pre-assembly Book of Faith event, Digging into the Word, led by Prof. Diane Jacobson. The living word came to us as we studied scripture in devotional, literary, historical and Lutheran contexts.

Learn more . . .

Visit our website: www.nwswi.org/who_we_are/assembly.phtml
for additional assembly information and photos.

Assembly Business

Elections

Synod Council

Apple River Conference: Larry Blahauvietz; Chequamegon Conference: Martha Scott; Chippewa Valley Conference: Barbara Solsaa; Dairyland Conference: Rev. Eric Bakken; Heart of the North Conference: Todd Ahneman; Lake Superior Conference: Rev. Larry Jorstad; St. Croix Valley Conference: Rev. Hilbert Schultz; Youth: Michael Yohn.

2011 Churchwide Assembly

Apple River Conference: Rev. Mary Ann Bowman, Helen Anderson; Chequamegon Conference: Rev. Kris Bjerke-Ulliman, Janice Devine-Ruggles; Mike Lindau; Chippewa Valley Conference: Rev. Paul Oppedahl, Gay Fehr, Aaron Sturgis; Dairyland Conference: Rev. Ramie Bakken, Blanche Thoreson, Arnie Rongstad; Heart of the North Conference: Rev. Bob Friese, Roger Hilde; Lake Superior Conference: Rev. Patrick Ziems, Tom Potterton; St. Croix Valley Conference: Rev. Amy Fondroy Eich, Lois Michaelson, Jon Schneewind; Youth: Emily Yenter.

Boards Outside of the Synod

Lutheran School of Theology: Rev. Greg Kaufmann; Lutheran Social Services: Rev. Rick Hoyme; Twin Ports Ministry to Seafarers: Rev. Sarah Larson; Wartburg Theological Seminary: Rev. Amy Odgren.

Assembly Offering

Worship offerings designated for the Synod Resource Center, Lutheran Malaria Initiative, and the Malawi Pastors' Academy totaled nearly \$12,000. Thank you for your generous support of these ministries.

Quarter Offering for Hunger

Although this offering was not physically collected at assembly this year, it is still an important part of our mission. At this point, \$13,494 has been received and will be divided with one-third going to ELCA World Hunger and 2/3 going to food sustainability projects in Malawi.

2011 Synod Assembly

June 3-4 at UW-Eau Claire

Resolutions

1. Synod Mission Plan - passed
2. Salary Standards - passed
3. Biennial Synod Assemblies - amended and referred to Synod Council for study and recommendation

Recognition

Ordination Anniversaries

25 years: Rev. Jeffrey Tarras, Rev. Dean Simpson, Rev. Barbara Koch, Rev. Loren Barker, Rev. Michael Briggs and Rev. Alice Hamm.

50 years: Rev. Robert Esse, Rev. Richard Kelling, Rev. James Homme.

Congregation Anniversaries

125 years: Augustana Lutheran Church, Cumberland; St Paul Lutheran Church, Medford; St Paul Lutheran Church, Augusta; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Curtiss; and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, rural Ellsworth.

100 years: Grace Lutheran Church, Eau Claire; Modena Lutheran Church, Mondovi; Bethel Lutheran Church, New Auburn; Grace of Pleasantville Lutheran Church, Whitehall; Fristad Lutheran Church, Centuria

25 years: St. John Lutheran Church, Ripplinger

Retirements

Rev. David Almlie, Rev. James Gordon, Rev. Alice Hamm, Rev. John Hosmann, Rev. Harlen Menk, Rev. Joel Olsen, Rev. Larry Sturgis and Rev. Vern Weeks.

NWSWI News

Watch your synod communications for these new developments in our shared ministry as a synod:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi pastor's academy: theological training will take place this fall for the 50+ pastors in ELCM and will be taught by a team from our synod as well as ELCM staff.

Missional School: a series of short courses will be offered for congregations to equip the laity to own the mission of the church for today and tomorrow.