



Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money



Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money

On Eagle's Wings: A Unique Ministry in the Arctic

On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Calling All Young Adults!

Member of Trinity, Topton, Receives Scholarship

Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story

The Tanzania Festival held on Friday, June 4, 2004, during the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod assembly became more colorful thanks to the sale of merchandise native to the Eastern African nation.

A member of the local committee planning the Tanzania Festival saw an article in the May issue of *The Lutheran* magazine that featured California resident Mary Ann Sheets' ministry of selling merchandise from Uganda and Tanzania and donating the proceeds to the Stand with Africa campaign. The committee contacted her and placed an order. Ms. Sheets sent an email to her contact in Tanzania at the Mwiki Bible College and boxes of merchandise were sent to Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading, Pa., in time for the assembly.

Colorful dresses, shirts, pillow covers, necklaces, bracelets, batiks, and baskets were displayed and sold during the assembly. During the festival itself, the merchandise was moved outside to the sidewalk at 6th and Washington Streets. The one-block area on Sixth between Washington and Walnut Streets was closed to vehicle traffic during the festival, and the street took on a "block party" atmosphere with the musicians and other booths. Most of the merchandise was sold during the assembly.



Not only did the festival raise awareness of the Tanzanian culture, but funds were also raised to assist our brothers and sisters who live in poverty in the synod's newest companion synod, the South Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The

total amount raised from the sale of this merchandise after expenses is nearly \$1,400. That money will be used to support the ministry in the diocese in Tanzania. One of the projects it will support is the cost of shipping a sea container of much-needed goods to our companion synod.



Thanks be to God!

Photos are copyright © Susan Lerner Photography.



PARTNERS IN
the spirit
SEPTEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

On Eagle's Wings
A Unique Ministry in the Arctic



Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money

On Eagle's Wings: A Unique Ministry in the Arctic

On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Calling All Young Adults!

Member of Trinity, Topton, Receives Scholarship

Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story



Faced with an acute shortage of ordained clergy, Christian churches in northern Canada came up with an innovative way to serve their faithful.

They set up an ecumenical flying ministry that delivers religious and educational services to the faithful in remote and isolated areas of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

On Eagle's Wings was established in February 1999 as "an ecumenical Christian ministry that proclaims Jesus Christ and serves the Church and individuals in remote and isolated areas of northern Canada."

Led by Executive Director Lee Berry, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada who has more than 20 years of experience as a pastor-pilot in Arctic ministry, *On Eagle's Wings* is the first ecumenical Christian ministry dedicated to the Arctic region.



In the beginning of the 20th century, missionaries traveled by boat and dogsled over vast distances to bring the Gospel to those living in the Canadian Arctic. In the early years, more than 100 pastors and full-time church workers served the communities of the North.

Today, only a handful of pastors and priests remain year-round to serve over 15,000 native people living in approximately 50 Arctic communities. Although a church building stands in many villages, there is often no one available on-site to provide full-time pastoral care.



"Lay people are becoming the leaders and the people who are shaping their churches. And what we are trying to do (through *On Eagle's Wings*) is support them as they become the Church, as they become the leaders," says Pr. Berry.

This has resulted in a renewed emphasis on giving people skills in Bible studies and church leadership, he said. "We do a lot with programs for children in the summertime."



On Eagle's Wings runs a vacation Bible school where volunteers from the U.S. and Canada teach children about the Bible.



Read about **Ruth Miller's** experience in helping with vacation Bible school in this issue of Partners.

On Eagle's Wings has been formally endorsed by the **Evangelical Lutheran Church In Canada (ELCIC)**, is recognized by the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)**, and welcomes the financial support of synods and congregations throughout the ELCA and the **Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)**. In addition, *On Eagle's Wings* has established collaborative relationships with the Roman Catholic **Diocese of the Mackenzie** and the Anglican **Diocese of Edmonton** and the **Diocese of the Arctic** in Canada.

Want more information about the program? Visit the *On Eagle's Wings* Web site at www.oneagleswings.org or write to them at their U.S. headquarters at On Eagle's Wings, 1000 West Main Street, Lansdale PA 19446.

The synod resource center will soon have a copy of a new video of the *On Eagle's Wings* ministry. Check with **Debbie Frey** at 610-395-6891 or debbie.frey@ecunet.org to reserve a date for later this fall.

PARTNERS IN
the spirit



On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money

On Eagle's Wings: A Unique Ministry in the Arctic

On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Calling All Young Adults!

Member of Trinity, Tipton, Receives Scholarship

Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story



In late June, Ruth Miller, synod director of ministry resources, and Miriam "Mim" Campbell, associate director of children and family ministries in the ELCA's Division for Congregational Ministries, traveled to Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories. They went to the tiny hamlet (population 910 in 2000) to lead vacation Bible school for the First Nation children who live there. The following is excerpted from Ruth's notes about the trip.

Travel

Our journey begins on Thursday, June 24, with all-day travel from Philadelphia to Yellowknife. Following two nights in Yellowknife, we fly to Inuvik, then travel by car to Fort McPherson. The 2.5-hour drive is on the Dempster Highway — a gravel, two-lane road. Halfway to Fort McPherson we take the ferry across the MacKenzie River. In the winter, an ice road is built across the river. In spring and fall there is no highway because of ice on the river.

The Community

Fort McPherson's main street is a gravel road. The hamlet has a very small motel, two food stores, a school (grades K-12), an Anglican church, the band (tribe) building that houses the community council and the town's radio station, a fire station, the station for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas Company, one senior housing unit for elders, and a small visitor's center. There is a small power plant,



but no community water or sewerage. Water is brought in from Great Deep Lake and stored in two water tanks. Smaller trucks deliver water to the homes daily.

The People

Most of the residents of Fort McPherson are Gwich'in, a First Nation band (tribe) concentrated in the Yukon.





We see children and elders, but few middle aged people. Some are employed by the ferry company along the river. Others work in the Gwich'in band office, radio station, two stores, inn, water company, electric company, and the Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas Company. Some make carvings from caribou bone or soapstone.

We are not invited into anyone's home. We do get inside the senior housing when we visit with Pastor Hannah, one of the elders. Each unit in the modest modular home has two small rooms and a bath. Mim carries potatoes home for an elder later in the week. She describes the two-room home as very spartan, but with a wide screen TV and a satellite dish — and no indoor plumbing!

The people are soft spoken, even the children. When around us, they speak in a whisper. They also laugh and giggle. The smallest silly instance sets them off. It is contagious.

The Church

St. Matthew's Anglican church is the only church in the community. Pastor Hannah Alexi, a Gwich'in elder, is the lay leader. She reads and preaches. She shares her responsibilities with another elder, Mary, and a younger Inuit woman, Rebecca. Anglican Bishop Larry Robertson hopes to ordain Hannah so she can preside at communion and have other responsibilities.



Mim and I attend church services Sunday morning. The service comes from the old Anglican prayer book, a special edition that is in both English and Gwich'in.

The congregation is primarily female and old. There are a few males and a very few middle-aged adults. There is one child. She is brought forward for a blessing at the end of the service.

Community Feasts



We are invited to two community feasts during our week. The first, on Sunday, is held to honor the schoolteachers, who will finish the school year the next day, the last day of school before summer vacation. The teachers, who are all white, will leave for the summer and return in the fall. A few live in the community year round.

The feast is held in "Hannah's field." Steaks and hamburgers are cooked on a large ground-level grill, where pots of tea are simmering. Everyone brings a covered dish. We have macaroni salad, tossed salad, potatoes, and corn-on-the-cob.

The second feast is on Thursday, July 1 — Canada Day. At noon the triathlon begins. It will end about 3:00 with a canoe race on the Peel River. In the meantime, there is a contest for children who have decorated their bicycles. Then everyone walks down to the river to wait for the canoes.

There has been very little rain. The walk to the river kicks up a lot of dust. The dirt is as fine as talcum powder. Just putting your foot down as you take a step sends up clouds of red dust. It has been dry for several weeks. Of course, if it were rainy, the

mosquitoes would be ten times as bad as they are.

After the canoes come in and the race is finished, everyone heads for Hannah's field and another feast. This one is T-bone steaks! The steak is delicious. I don't know if it is beef or caribou.

Then comes the annual tug of war. The winner of the contest is determined after three tries — and the women win! I am taking pictures of the first two tries. As I begin to take pictures of the third, a Gwich'in woman tells me to "put down your camera and help us tug!" There is a lot of laughing and giggling.



Weather

The weather is quite comfortable. Temperatures are in the high 60s and low 70s. The humidity is very low.

Because we are above the Arctic Circle, we experience daylight almost all of the time. We finish with Bible school about 8:30 or 9:00 each evening. When we leave the parish hall after cleaning up and preparing for the next day, it is midnight, but the sun is still shining!

Baseball games are played at 1:00 a.m. Children are up past midnight riding bikes. It is difficult to sleep unless you can completely blacken the bedroom. I never thought about darkness preparing one to sleep but I think I believe that now. The children sleep in late in the morning. That's why we have Bible school in the evening.

Bible School

When we arrive in Fort McPherson, one of our first stops is to visit Pastor Hannah. This is a courtesy call — we have to confirm our Bible school schedule with her. Because school is in session on Monday, we decide to begin Bible school Monday evening and continue with evenings, 6:30-8:30 p.m., all week except for Thursday, Canada Day, when we will have Bible school from 10:00 a.m. until noon.

We invite Pastor Hannah and about a dozen other elders to the evening session on Tuesday. The theme is blessings and we ask them to give their blessing to the children. Tuesday night Pastor Hannah and one other female elder show up. But that is enough.

A staff of two, however, is not enough. Mim and I run around in circles.



Registering the children Monday evening is quite a task. I handle that while Mim takes pictures of each of the children with a Polaroid camera. The children love this! While I'm handling registration and Mim is taking pictures, we try to keep the children occupied with coloring pages and the story poster on the wall. Their hands and eyes are everywhere. Items disappear or are moved from place to place.

We do have the assistance of Sue Oliver, the church's summer intern. Sue serves as the storyteller Monday evening, then she is off for dinner with friends. This happens each evening.

One of the mothers, Verna, comes Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings. She helps children with the crafts but does not move from her chair at the table. She is a lovely, gentle woman. On Wednesday she offers to wash the cups after snack time, and

that's the last we see of her.

With only the two of us, the sessions are rather free flowing. We begin with a craft, then move to music and a quiet time with storytelling, then more music and another craft and a snack.

The children clamor for attention. Three-year-old Tyler, full of bug bites and the "Old Nick," teases the older boys by punching and pinching. He is particularly annoying one evening during music time. I pick Tyler up and hold him on my lap. Tyler doesn't move a muscle! He sits on my lap all during the singing. Later, when I tell this story to Lee Berry, Lee says that the children are starved for touch. The parents love their children but in this culture there is no affection shown — no hugs, no kisses.

Attendance is very irregular. Tyler and Austin (who are white) attend every evening, as do Jaylene, Miranda, Chantell, and several other girls who are Gwich'in. The other boys begin to drop out as the week goes on. I wonder if they would have stayed if we had had a male adult presence in the group.

By the end of the week I realize that relationships are just beginning to be built. A week is such a short time. I can understand why teams repeat visits in the same community year after year. You can build relationships with the children and trust with the adults. It offers more opportunity to enlist adults to help with Bible school and perhaps to train some indigenous leaders.

Would I return? Probably. I would insist, however, on a team of at least three, preferably four, people, at least one of whom is male. It's an expensive and exhausting trip but I won't forget it. I'm really glad I was invited to go. The way the children learn about God's love through Jesus is through us and how we relate to them. It's no different in Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories, than it is in Coopersburg, Pennsylvania.





Calling All Young Adults!

Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money

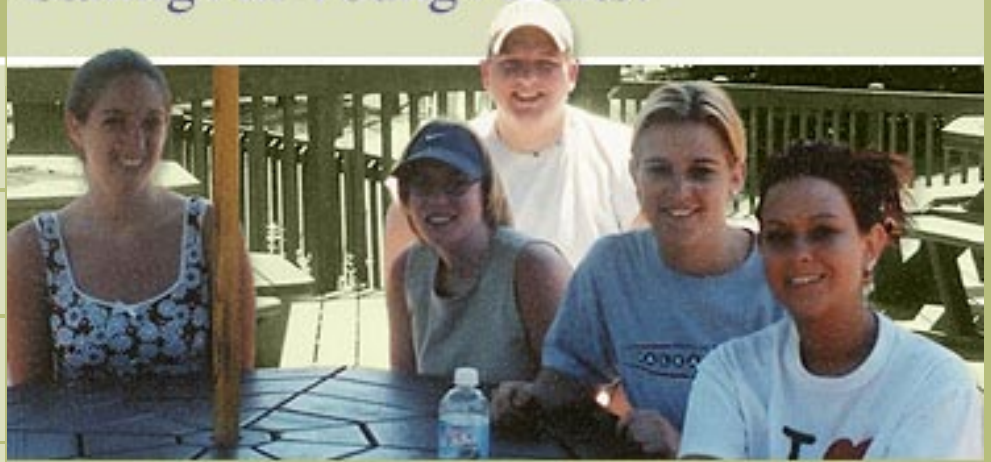
On Eagle's Wings: A Unique Ministry in the Arctic

On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Calling All Young Adults!

Member of Trinity, Topton, Receives Scholarship

Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story



PICTURED (left to right): Katie Scheetz, Elizabeth Hinrichs, Josh Mountz, Andrea Saylor and Tammy Saylor

During the past year, a group of young adults in our synod have been meeting for fellowship and support. In early June the group spent a day at the Trexler Game Preserve in Schnecksville, working and playing. Other activities are being planned for this fall and winter.

The gathering at Trexler Game Preserve took place June 12. Five young adults from our synod gathered for a day of community service and fellowship at the game preserve. The morning was spent weeding the flowerbeds throughout the zoo in an effort to help the game preserve catch up on the little things that time and funding have not allowed for this year.

After a morning of weeding and conversation the group took a break for a picnic lunch and then enjoyed the remainder of the day walking around the zoo. It was a perfect day to spend in the zoo with young adults from the synod talking and hanging out as well as helping a place in the community that has been struggling to stay open due to lack of funding.

Events are being planned for the fall. The young adults welcome others in the synod to join them. If you are in the 18-30 age group and want to connect with other Lutheran young adults, here's your opportunity. Please contact Tammy Saylor at Tlsaylor22@aol.com. (Please note: The "l" in Tl is a lower case L.) Tammy will be in touch with you.



PARTNERS IN
the spirit
SEPTEMBER 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Member of Trinity, Topton,

Receives Scholarship

FUND FOR
LEADERS
IN MISSION



Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money

On Eagle's Wings: A Unique Ministry in the Arctic

On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Calling All Young Adults!

Member of Trinity, Topton, Receives Scholarship

Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story

On June 16, the Fund for Leaders in Mission awarded 16 full-tuition scholarships and 16 partial-tuition scholarships to a new group of students entering seminary this fall. In just five years, the Fund has awarded 98 scholarships totaling \$1,250,000 to faithful and promising men and women preparing to serve our church through ordained or rostered lay ministry.

When classes begin at the eight ELCA seminaries this fall, 75 students will be receiving tuition support from the Fund for Leaders in Mission and the related Synod and Congregation partnerships. One of the 16 new students selected for full-tuition scholarships is Lucinda Francisco, a member of Trinity, Topton. Lucinda will enter the **Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg** this fall to pursue a Master of Divinity degree.

One Person's Story

One of the 2002 recipients was Giovanni Sanchez, a former lawyer and member of neighboring Metropolitan New York Synod, who is studying at the **Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia**. "Now more than ever God is calling men and women to rise to the occasion and bring their gifts, and talents to aid a people that need hope and consolation," says Mr. Sanchez. "I believe God has called ordinary people like me to be an instrument in his hands and bring forth healing to our nation. There is plenty of mission work to be done by ELCA congregations in their communities."



You Can Help

During the past two years, the Thrivent Financial for Lutheran Foundation \$1 million challenge grant to the Fund has provided an opportunity to increase the impact of gifts to the Fund in support of seminary scholarships. The Fund has received \$1,350,000 toward the \$2 million goal!

You can help the Fund reach its goal. The Fund still needs 248 congregations to make new gifts before August 30, 2005. With your participation, the



Thrivent Foundation Challenge will enable the ELCA to reach the goal of significantly increasing the number of students assisted with scholarships. With your continued support and partnership, a new generation of gifted leaders for the congregations of the ELCA can be lifted up.

For more information, visit the Fund for Leaders in Mission Web site at www.elca.org/fo/fundforleaders.

PARTNERS IN
the spirit



Anthony Pagotto:
A Seminarian's Story



Tanzania Festival Raises Awareness and Money

On Eagle's Wings: A Unique Ministry in the Arctic

On Eagle's Wings: One Person's Experience

Calling All Young Adults!

Member of Trinity, Topton, Receives Scholarship

Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story

Ed. note: This article was posted on the website of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in December 2003. Tony, who graduated from the seminary in May, was just elected as pastor of St. James Lutheran Church, Zenith.

Tony Pagotto, a member of Hope Lutheran Church, Cherryville, Pa., says his years in seminary "have been the most formative of my life." The combination of academics and fieldwork experience "have changed the way I look at the world. I see things from an entirely new perspective now. I've just grown a lot."

Pagotto is 30 now. He came to seminary right after graduating from East Stroudsburg State University. He'll complete his studies this academic year at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, earning a Master of Divinity degree. During his seminary career, Tony has preached and taught the eighth grade confirmation class and the adult forum at Christ Lutheran Church in Allentown, PA. He's coordinated the student evaluation of a young professor at the seminary. And most recently he's undertaken chaplaincy responsibilities at Cathedral Village, a retirement community in Roxborough, PA.

What strikes you about Tony is his sense of call to ordained ministry. Tony says, "In each year of seminary, I have grown spiritually and mentally in ways I never imagined." Tony credits "the people in congregations who have solidified my calling."

Tony especially found his internship in North Dakota to be significant in his preparation for ordained ministry. "I thought parts of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod were rural, but I discovered that Tioga County in Pennsylvania is a major metropolitan area compared to parts of North Dakota," he says. In the isolation of that intern congregation, Tony was struck by the deep faith of the people. "They taught me what living the baptized life is all about."

Now, with much of his fieldwork experience at seminary behind him, Tony



is reflecting on how to integrate the leadership skills he has been honing with the practical life in ministry that lies ahead – considering how best to conduct pre-marital counseling, for example. Soon he'll be heading into the real world of parish ministry.

Tony will be ready. The seminary and the congregations in which he has learned have seen to this. So, too, has the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, which provided loans and grants for which Tony is grateful.

PARTNERS IN
the spirit