

# SYNOD NEWS

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

December 2007



## Scrapings and Parings for Advent

**A**dvent again. It's about time!

The long green season after Pentecost grows wearisome towards its end. We are eager for a fresh beginning: Advent again. It's about time!

But, also, Advent *is* about time. Witness the readings for its First Sunday: Isaiah anticipates the "days to come;" Jesus warns of the mysterious unexpectedness of his day and hour; and St. Paul reminds us that we "know what time (*kairos*) it is, how it is now the moment to wake from sleep."

Spiritually we make our

Advent preparation at the intersection of God's time and ours, of *kairos* and *chronos*,



of the linear calendar of days and months and the cyclical seasons of the liturgical year, of the beginning of the new church year and the end of time at our Lord's second advent.

In this particular Advent season, I find myself somewhat preoccupied by time. My second and final term as synod bishop is coming to an end. I can precisely count down the days and the hours. At the same time, the synod is

anticipating the election of the next bishop and expecting a new beginning of its life together.

My musings about time have led me back to T. S. Eliot's "The Four Quartets." These marvelous poems bring to words Eliot's profound and profoundly Christian reflections on time's fullness and measure. In the fourth quartet, *Little Gidding*, he observes,

"What we call the beginning is often the end  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from."

And this applies not just to the synod as it elects a new bishop but also to me as I anticipate new beginnings in ministry and life. Testifying to God's constancy throughout our temporal adventures, all our endings and beginnings, Eliot continues

"We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time."

Next year, at this time, when it is Advent again, our exploration of the seasons of this liturgical year will have refreshed and enriched us. We shall know even better then

that intersection of God's time and ours where faith dwells in the gracious fullness of time.

David R. Strobel  
Bishop,  
Northeastern  
Pennsylvania Synod



# Upcoming Events

## Hearts Ignited with Prayer



2008 Learning Ministries Day

January 26, 2008

Trinity Lutheran Church,  
Robesonia

### Keynote speaker

Diane Monroe, ELCA Director for Christian Education and co-author of *Heart Ignite*.

### A Variety of Workshops on Prayer

Including prayer shawl ministry, yoga, prayer beads, praying out loud, "pertinent" prayers, and more...

### Cost

\$20 includes lunch

### Augsburg Fortress bookstore

Check the synod website, [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org), for more information.



## Saturday School

Saturday School is held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Emmaus.

**January 19:** 9:00 a.m. session, *Lutheran Confessions* (Part 2), Pr. Michael Bennethum, associate of the bishop; 1:00 p.m. session, *Luke/Acts*, Pr. Jeff Butz, Grace, Belfast

**February 16:** 9:00 a.m. session, *The Gospel of John*, Dr. Audrey West, associate professor of New Testament, Lutheran school of Theology at Chicago; 1:00 p.m. session, *Christianity and World Religions*, Dr. Paul Rajashekar, dean, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

More information and a registration form are on the synod website ([www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org)). Or contact Cheryl Meinschein, [cherylrich@fast.net](mailto:cherylrich@fast.net).

**SYMDANO** (Synod Youth Ministry Day and Networking Opportunity)

April 19, 2008

Site to be announced.



## Hearing God's Call in Your Life

Discernment Retreat for Ages 18-30

January 6-8, 2008

Camp Lutheridge, Arden, NC

This retreat for young adults will help them figure out God's call in their lives. Conversation will focus on how best to serve God and God's people.

More information about Project Connect is available at [www.projectconnect.org](http://www.projectconnect.org). You will also find a registration form for and more information about the retreat at that site.

Be refreshed. Be inspired. Be connected. **Come to the Waters!**



Register now for the WELCA 7<sup>th</sup> Triennial Gathering at [www.womenoftheelca.org/tg08/](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/tg08/).