

SYNOD NEWS

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

April 2008



21st Synod Assembly
May 29-31, 2008
Split Rock Resort
Lake Harmony, PA

What Is Our Mission Together as a Synod?

Like a congregation preparing to call a pastor, a synod electing a bishop needs to consider its specific situation and concerns and explore its vision for the future.

As we look at our mission as the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, consider these questions:

- What are this synod's priorities for ministry?
- What are our greatest challenges, opportunities, resources, and liabilities?
- Where do we want to be in the next five to ten years?
- What priorities and emphases do we have for leadership?
- What qualities, experiences, skills, and leadership styles would serve us best?

Questions such as these were explored in the fall mission district assemblies and in focus groups that met in February.



Participants in the focus groups, chosen

at random from across the synod, discussed issues, concerns, and priorities with representatives from the ELCA Synodical Relations and Research and Evaluation offices.



Of the approximately 350 invitations sent out, 138 people attended the groups. Of those, 80 were clergy, 9 were associates in ministry, 1 was a deaconess, and 48 were lay people.

The report on needs, concerns, and priorities identified through fall assemblies and focus groups will be distributed at spring mission district assemblies and will be available on the synod website (www.godslove.org) April 13.

How Are Prayer and Conversation Part of the Process?



We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout the election process. Some people are more comfortable seeking that counsel individually, telling no one their thoughts and not speaking about the process. Some people discern the Spirit's guidance in conversation and debate with others. They feel comfortable telling others what they think and inviting others to join them in those convictions.

The counsel of the Holy Spirit is granted to God's people in a variety of settings. We can trust the Holy Spirit to be active in our private deliberations and in our conversations with others as we seek God's wisdom and guidance.

As the people of God, we prayerfully enter into this process of discernment and deliberation. The election of a bishop marks the beginning of a new partnership in ministry. In the days ahead, uphold the bishop in prayer, and pray for all those who are asked to consider a call to this ministry. Be diligent in your own faithful and creative service to God's people and God's world, and work together in honesty and trust.

Prayer Shawls

As a reminder that the election of a bishop is grounded in and guided by prayer, each person who attends the assembly will receive a simple prayer shawl. Pastor Eileen Le Van, Nativity Lutheran Church, Reading, is overseeing the project to make these prayer shawls.



If you would like to contribute to this project, please contact Pastor Le Van at Nativity Lutheran Church in Reading, at 610-374-3230. The shawls should be made in a simple, scarf-like design, 6-8 inches wide and 48 inches long, knitted or crocheted in a stitch of the maker's choice.

For more information about the assembly or to register, go to www.godslove.org. Click the link on the home page.

Upcoming Events



Fit for Jesus SYMDANO

(Synod Youth Ministry Day and
Networking Opportunity)

April 19, 2008

Christ Lutheran Church, Conyngham

An event for youth in grades 3 through 12 plus their parents, advisors, and Sunday school teachers. This year's theme, "Fit for Jesus," will focus on our spiritual, physical, and emotional health.

The cost of \$10.00 per person includes the cost for lunch AND an in-kind offering of canned food, paper goods, or detergent for Conyngham's Valley Food Pantry. More information and a registration form are available on the youth news and events page on the synod website (www.godslove.org). Registration is by mail only. Deadline: **April 7, 2008.**



Lutheran Day at the Capitol

April 9, 2008



You are invited to join Pennsylvania bishops and Lutheran advocates from across the state as they gather in Harrisburg for Lutheran Day at the Capitol. The Pennsylvania ELCA bishops will meet at 8:00 A.M. in the East Wing Lobby of the Capitol to greet and share concerns with PA legislators. The program that begins at 9:30 A.M. will include the keynote speaker, Ralie Deffenbaugh, president, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

For more information, click the link on the synod homepage at www.godslove.org.



Saturday School

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

April 19: 9:00 a.m. session, *Preparing to Preach*, Pr. Joseph Scholtes, St. Paul, Orwigsburg; 1:00 p.m. session: *The Book of Revelation*, Dr. Mark Vitalis Hoffman, associate professor of biblical studies, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

May 17: 9:00 a.m. session: *preaching practicum, open to SALMs only*; 1:00 p.m. session: *The Whys of Worship*, Dr. Michael Krentz, director of music, the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit.

More information and a registration form are on the synod website (www.godslove.org).



RESCHEDULED

A Women's Retreat
on Discernment

April 25-27, 2008

Mariawald Renewal Center, Shillington

This year's retreat, rescheduled because of snow, will explore how to feel God's presence more clearly, hear God's voice, and discern God's will for our lives by honing our inward and outward listening skills.

The retreat leader is Eileen Flanagan, a Quaker who writes about spirituality. The retreat fee of \$140 includes room and all meals. Registration deadline is April 4, 2008.

For a brochure with more information and a registration form, go to www.godslove.org/calendar and click the link on the date in April. Or call 610-682-1337 or 888-499-2699.