

# SYNOD NEWS

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

December 2008

## Advent: A Time for Pondering

What a glorious time I have had preparing for each of the *Evenings with the Bishop!*

They began with the East Berks Mission District on October 14 and conclude with the Northern Lehigh Mission District on November 23.

As unified as they have been in purpose, each has been different from the others in personality. These gatherings have been revealing about the composition of our synod and about the

nature of the people.

Each evening provided a

snapshot about what lies ahead as we live out our discipleship in Jesus' name. While some things became clear to me, other things arose as new considerations. Some questions were answered, others were raised.

That is surely part of the dynamic of daily ministry for all of you.

It is now helpful for me to carry outcomes of the nine evenings into the season of Advent.

Advent offers that kind of opportunity in a way offered by none of the other worship seasons. Lent comes close, but I associate Lent with more deeply aching spiritual issues that beg for healing. Advent is more about beginnings for me, more about innovations.

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down* (Isaiah 64:1; Advent 1B).

So, I will ponder in a focused way the things I've heard said in each mission district: the issues, the appeals, the insights, the concerns, the hopes.

You have been articulate and sincere about matters that I needed to hear. Advent will afford me opportunity to make the most of what has unfolded for me in the midst of God's people in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Please pray that my service as bishop will be



empowered as a result of this Advent discipline.

Hearing the Advent readings from Isaiah, Mark, John, and Luke will enrich the pondering. So too will singing Advent hymns and watching the Advent wreath candles light one-by-one. I feel already the quiet excitement of the faithful as they gather throughout our synod and throughout our whole church. *Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear* (Isaiah 40:9; Advent 2B).

My Advent hope for you is that time will be given for pondering paths that will lead you forward to new days of promise-fulfillment in Jesus – the incarnation of God's loving purpose for all creation.

Samuel R. Zeiser, bishop

Read weekly messages from Bishop Zeiser on his web page! Click the link at [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org)



# Upcoming Events



**2009 Learning Ministries Day**  
**January 24, 2009**  
 Union Lutheran Church,  
 Schnecksville

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** The Rev. Dr. Rolf A. Jacobson, associate professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN.

More information and a registration form are available on the [synod website](http://www.godslove.org). Scroll to the date, January 24, on the calendar page at [www.godslove.org/calendar](http://www.godslove.org/calendar).

Mark your calendar now!

# LIFT



**Lutherans  
 In  
 Faith  
 Together**

**Saturday, June 13, 2009**  
**Muhlenberg College**

**Keynote Speaker:** The Rev. Dr. Mark Allan Powell, Professor of New Testament, Trinity Lutheran Seminary  
**Music:** Dakota Road

**More information at**  
[www.godslove.org/LIFT](http://www.godslove.org/LIFT)

## Did You KNOW ?

The synod has its own [Book of Faith website](http://www.godslove.org/book-of-faith)?

You can find it at [www.godslove.org/book-of-faith](http://www.godslove.org/book-of-faith). There's also a link on the synod home page ([www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org)).

On our Book of Faith site you can

- learn more about the initiative
- find out how you can be involved
- check out resources for the initiative
- keep up to date with news and ideas
- join the conversation on the synod blog\*\*

You will also find links to the ELCA Book of Faith site, where you can

- sign on to the Book of Faith initiative
- join the Book of Faith forum
- sign up to receive Book of Faith e-Updates

\*\*Don't miss the [blog](#) – especially the Book of Faith **road trip video!**

Ryan Hart, a confirmation student in Towanda, and his pastor, Jira Albers, traveled across the synod – and beyond – to ask people their view and use of the Bible.

First stop: Bear Creek Camp and conversations with children and leaders.

**Check it out!**

