

Praxis*

*(prak'sis) n., 1. Practical application or exercise of a body of knowledge.

April 2006

Inside this issue

- 2 **Stewardship**
- 3 **The Bishop**
- 4 **Discipling Team**
- 5 **News & Notes**
- 6 **Around the Synod**
- 7 **Synod Calendar**

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Living in God's Amazing Grace

Bringing Good News to the Poor.

The Assembly theme will guide our time together as God's grace leads and prods the faithful to keep the needs of the poor in our hearts and in our actions. The Assembly will offer times of reflection, listening and learning about the many gifts and resources God is providing to us to serve the poor.

We'll view a *Rebuilding Together* video of the work that congregations are doing in providing housing for low income people in local neighborhoods.

Congregations involved in community organizing projects in various areas of the Synod will lead a workshop on what this work means both for the community and to the congregation.

And, remember, that the poor include the poor in spirit.

The Assembly will also have business to consider, anniversaries to celebrate, times of prayer and worship and music to refresh us.

The Synod Youth Committee will again serve as tellers, documents distributors and worship participants.

**Register online for the Assembly and hotel at
www.spselca.org**

See you May 19-21 in Burlingame!



Pr. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl

MEANINGFUL MEASURES

Pr. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist

Statistics can be deadly. But statistics are never dead. They are always story tellers.

Recently, a print-out of Mission Support giving by congregations in the Sierra Pacific Synod revealed a three year decline. That is a deadly statistic. But anything but dead. It tells a story! We can (and should) do better.

A review of adult baptisms throughout last year by congregations of the Synod reveals an average of 0.9 adult baptisms per year. That, too, is a deadly statistic, but it really tells a story about our evangelism efforts.

Contributions to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal in 2005 totaled a record \$17 million dollars! Wow! And ELCA members contributed a total of \$36.8 in disaster response in the past year. Whew! People care about people.

Still awake? As I said, statistics are deadly. But what a story they tell of Christian folks caring – seeking to provide the cup of cold water and all the other Matthew 25 items Jesus said we were doing unto Him as we did them unto the least of our sisters and brothers.

So, how are you doing with interpreting to your people what their gifts are making possible day by day through the varied ministries of your congregation?

Tell the stories! Give them the statistics. And give God the glory. For it is out of God's abundance that we flourish and nourish. Statistics can be deadly. But statistics are never dead. They are always story tellers.

**Statistics
as
Story Tellers**

Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod

Pondering Death and Resurrection

A beloved spiritual for Lent: “Were you there?” Were you there when they crucified my Lord? We know that verse well.

But consider the last verse: Were you there when he rose up from the tomb? And does it sometimes cause you to tremble, tremble, tremble?

Without the resurrection, we’d never observe Good Friday, and Jesus would have been at best, a blip in history.

But Christ did rise from the dead. The first disciples saw him. And they trembled. And within three centuries, had turned the Mediterranean world upside down.

I think it will be a great blessing for the church, for each of our congregations, if we ponder the death AND resurrection so deeply that we got a case of the trembles. A case of the trembles will move off us the dime. Surely a church that knows the power of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, cannot be content with trivialities. Confronting the resurrection as a reality, discovering, by God’s grace, that power in our lives opens the doors of our church, and sends us outward to the neighborhood, community, and world in which we live.

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble: the power of Christ and the world’s vast need.



Bishop Mullen greets seminarian Alan Rogstad following the mid-week service at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Word & Sacrament Discipling Team

Chair

Ms Ann Watkins
Our Savior's
Lafayette

District A

Pr Brian Classen
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Santa Rosa

District B

Mr Carlton Holte
Davis

District C

Pr Marty Schaefer
El Cerrito

District D

Pr Susan Scott
Union City

District E

Mr Greg Silliman
Ceres

Conference Dean

Pr Chris Warner-Carey
Ukiah

At Large

Ms Sharon Biller
San Jose

At Large

Ms Susan Tevis
Chico

Word and Sacrament Discipling Team

Ann Watkins, Chair

*“Marked with the Cross of Christ forever, we are claimed,
gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.”*

ELCA Mission Statement

At a recent meeting of the Western Mission Network in Arizona, daily prayer services were centered on these words of the mission statement. Through readings, liturgy, hymns and prayers, selected to focus on a particular part of the statement, participants were drawn closer to the meaning of the mission statement. Baptism was a central theme and various methods were used to remind members of the group of the symbols of baptism. These included prominence of the Baptismal font, actual sprinkling of water on participants, being marked with the sign of the Cross by the person sitting next to you, and receiving a shell from the sea to take home during the last service as a visual reminder of the experience. Each day brought us a new example of being claimed in baptism, gathered together to share, grow, and produce, and then sent back to our individual cities and states as emissaries of our Lord.



The font at Faith Lutheran in Chico.

Mission Rwanda Poster

The poster done by Steve Troester illustrated the project taken on by Faith Lutheran Church in Chico. Funds were raised to provide a motorcycle for Pr Twahira Elidard in Kagitumba, Rwanda.

The Sunday School, the Youth Group and WELCA combined to raise \$3200 for the project. Way to go, people of Faith! Thanks to you, the pastor can more easily make his rounds.



Stewardship Leaders Meet

Margie Back, Mission Interpreter coordinator (seated in center) and Pr Bud Egdahl standing right, met with other stewardship-minded folks: Louise Evenson at left and Danielle Beem at right, and Keith Mundy, standing. Both Beem and Mundy are ELCA stewardship staff people who give support and assistance to synods. Look for Margie Back's bulletin inserts in email to the congregation or the congregation's mission contact person's email., or on our web site

www.spselca.org for help with information in communicating to members where mission support money goes here at home and around the globe. Pr Egdahl is available to lead congregational leaders in the Consecration Sunday Program as well as sharing other ideas for congregational stewardship. Contact him at Egdahl@spselca.org

Mission Investment Fund Visitors with Bp Mullen (MIF)

Pr Tom Dudley (L), regional staff and Pr Arnie Pierson (Center), Vice President visited Bp Mullen recently to report on how well the Mission Investment Fund is serving this synod's congregations.





prayers@spselca.org

Prayer Ventures depends on you—not only for prayers, but also your prayer requests. Please e-mail your requests to prayers@spselca.org or call us. Remember to practice forgiveness when we err and let us know about errors and omissions.

Comfort of the gospel: **Pr Donna Duensing** at the death of her husband, Dr. Robert Smith, in March.

Healing for: **Marilyn Thoreson**, wife of retired **Pr Ron Thoresen**.

ROSTER CHANGES

Sandra Bentz to Trinity Lutheran, Porterville
Julie Webb to Napa Valley Lutheran Church, Associate Pastor
Robert Wilse, to Shepherd of the Hills, Vacaville

Congregations in transition

Key: (1) Forming Call Committee, (2) Developing Profile, (3) Interviewing, (4) Calling

Congregation

Auburn, Bethlehem (1)
Antioch, St John's (2)
Granite Bay, Resurrection (2)
Hollister, Trinity (3)
Livermore, Holy Cross (3)
Los Altos, Immanuel (1)
Los Banos, St John's (4)
Modesto, Emanuel
Orangevale, Christ the King (2)
Orinda, Lamorinda Korean
Palo Alto, Grace (3)
Pleasant Hill, St Mark's (3)
Sacramento,
Church of the Master (3)
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)
Santa Rosa, Thanksgiving (2)
Stockton, Zion (1)
Ukiah, Grace

Interim Pastor

Dan Hodgson
John Ridenour
Frank Starkey
Don Haven
Jan Womer
Roger Lee
Kirk Shipley
Jae Guen Lee
John Kerr
Lyle Beckman
Dick Smith
Lorents Flak
Stan Niemi
Allen Dunn

NOTE: Congregations engaged in a self study process, or on hold for various reasons, are not listed.



The retrofitting of St Mark's in San Francisco. The congregation is holding all services in the Urban Life Cener buidling, next door to the church building. It will be some months before the job is complete.

Synod Calendar

April

- 1-2 3-6th grade gathering, Mt Cross
- 10 Chrism Mass
- 14 Good Friday, Office closed
- 16 Resurrection of Our Lord-Easter Day
- 21-23 Grace Gathering, Mt Cross
- 29 Word and Sacrament Discipling Team

May

- 13 Commencement, Pacific Lutheran
Theological Seminary
- 18 Synod Council
- 19-21 Synod Assembly
- 22 Office Closed
- 25 Ascension of Our Lord
- 29 Memorial Day, Office closed



Pr Kibbie Ruth, Director for Kyros Ministry and workshop presenter at the May Assembly.

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To receive the Synod weekly e-mail, "Byte of Synod" send a note to info@spselca.org