

Praxis*

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

Sierra Pacific Synod 2006 Assembly

*Puppets of Praise from
St Mathew, Walnut Creek*



*Baptismal font reminded us
of our baptism into Christ*



June 2006

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*Rev Robert
Newton,
LC-MS
District
President
greeting the
Assembly*



*United Methodist Bishop
Beverly Shamana and
Bishop Mullen*



*Districts Deans and
communion distributors at
closing worship on Sunday*

Prayer First was the practise at the beginning of each business session and a responsive sung lityny (Everyday God) closed each session. The Living Water Band provided music throughout the weekend. Rev Byron Williams received a standing ovation from the Assembly. Guest speakers Pr Karen Ward and Pr Nate Frambach created a buzz with their presentations on the postmodern church. Local congregational members welcomed voting members and vistors with great hospitality. For more Assembly coverage, go to www.spselca.org



BECAUSE WE KNOW WHO WE ARE

Pastor "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist

Identify has become a major issue today.

Try getting to the airplane, and photo ID and boarding passes are both essential items to show who you are. You know! But they need to know.

Border security is to become equally strict in requiring each of us to prove who we are and that we are citizens.

Identity theft has become a major industry in the country. Some folks gather social security numbers or credit card numbers and get rich selling them to others who "get lots of stuff" with your money, faking your identity. It is a major problem and concern to each of us.

**No
Identity
Crisis**

It's been a while, but I clearly remember parents talking about a youth who was "out there trying to find himself or herself." Another important piece in our identity.

The great joy and God's grace is that we can always know who we are. We are given identity. We belong to God! And that is salvation in its simplest terms. And the strongest impetus to good stewardship one can have.

Think of what a gift these passages assure:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people.." I Peter 2:9a Or this one: Beloved, we are God's children now.." I Jn 3:2 Or this: You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.." I Cor 6:9

You can think of others, I'm sure. These are our true identity in Christ. The old camp song "Living for Jesus, a life that is true, striving to please him in all that I do." gives the direction of the one who knows that God has claimed us, bought and freed us, not with silver and gold but with Christ's precious blood ".in order that I (we) might be God's own, and live under God in righteousness and holiness forever."

Live it up! Live it out!

Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod

Seek and Speak the Truth in Love

Late Saturday evening at the 2006 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly the voting members cheered and waved their green voting cards, because they'd just overwhelmingly approved an amended 2007 Sierra Pacific Synod budget, ending more than two hours of discussion/debate.

Why the jubilation? It was not merely because a long discussion was over and everyone was tired. There was also a sense in the room that something important had happened.

Everyone knew going into this debate that views and feelings regarding the budget were strong. Earlier in the day the assembly spent about 45 minutes in a "committee of the whole", a helpful format that gives an opportunity to express views and ask questions without getting snarled up in the machinations of parliamentary of process with the sometimes confusing process of voting repeatedly according to Robert's Rule of Order.

What was the concern? The Synod Finance Committee had proposed, and the Synod Council had approved and forwarded to the assembly, a budget that strongly emphasized putting synodical funds in the direction of passionate spirituality and contextual evangelism (the two areas consistently revealed in congregational Natural Church Development assessments as the lowest scores), and identified in the budget by the Heartsprings project and a significant increase in funding for new mission starts. In order to do this, based on projections of synodical mission support, cuts in the level of support for agencies and institutions had been proposed, though "Second Mile Giving" was presented as another way of providing funding. Some voting members strongly believed that this symbolized a move away from commitment to the poor, especially in the case of the large line item reduction to Lutheran Social Services.

Thus, on Saturday evening, when we got to the actual parliamentary debate on the budget, divergent positions were forcefully, but respectfully, expressed, and many amendments were proposed and rejected. It took a lot of time. There was even a point at which it seemed that we'd never approve a budget; indeed, someone raised the question of what would happen if we didn't! We kept on going, and finally an amendment was made that seemed to the assembly to be a kind of win-win solution. In a nutshell, it was this: increase the line amount of expected income, and restore the cuts while maintaining the new funding directions, including "Second Mile Giving", in the original proposal.

I discern two important developments in what happened: One, the Holy Spirit helped us get beyond rigid "positional" thinking to embrace what is the deeper interest of all—faithfulness to the mission of Jesus Christ. Two, the Spirit is calling us to more strongly support the mission of the Sierra Pacific Synod, and showed us a way.

No wonder the voting members waved the green cards and cheered! Now let's all be cheerleaders for the mission of God in the world by supporting it with generous giving. And let all God's people say, AMEN!



RWANDA SCHOOL PROJECT

Robin Strickler

When I first suggested that I would walk 60 miles to raise \$20,000 for the school, I really wondered if I could do it. The good news for my future students is that the cliché phrases “many hands make light work” and “step by step, we can accomplish great things” are true! Thanks to many of you who sponsored me, fed me, encouraged and prayed for me and walked with me, I enjoyed the walk immensely and we met our \$20,000 goal! Photos and commentary from the walk are at www.rwandaschoolproject.org/photogallery.html

The Senior Youth Forum at Davis Lutheran Church in California also completed their walk to raise funds for the school’s water system, based on their theme of “Living Water”. They reported that they had 24 walkers, including a 4-month-old in a stroller, a variety of students and adults and a woman two days short of her 80th birthday! Many thanks to them as they were able to raise over \$2000 — almost half our budget for the water cisterns we plan to install.

We now have a website at www.rwandaschoolproject.org ! You can find out about Rwandan history, plans for the school and current developments and you can also make a donation on the “You Can Help” page. Eventually, we will post student photos, student and teacher profiles, and projects and pictures of our classes, so stay tuned. If you’d like a list of the books on our wish list, please take a look at the “How You Can Help” page on our website. Thanks to my sister Alison for hosting the site.

Finally, we’ve made an important first step of getting “lift off”. As an organization, we’re now six months old and we thank YOU for this wonderful start. There are still many mountains to climb (Rwanda being the “Land of 10,000 Hills”!) and there will be a shift in perspective once I am in Rwanda. We have raised about 1/7 of what we need to make a “full start”.

And in all this, you are needed. It became crystal clear to me as I walked last month that this is not the “dream of one woman”, as one newspaper said, but the efforts of many. Let us work together!

LEADERSHIP TEAM ON THE MOVE

Pr Todd, Bertani

Listening Posts remain a high priority for the Team. Five posts have been held, with two more yet to go: Pleasanton/Livermore area and Reno/Tahoe area. Recommendations for creating environments of nurture and support of our rostered leaders should be ready in the fall.

The Professional Leaders Retreat team is at work for the 2007 retreat. We and the planners agree that a theological Conference can be separate event from the retreat. This Team will be responsible for the theological conference in the future.

Coaching for congregations is underway and we are keeping in touch with others to learn how our Team can support these efforts.

Bishop Mullen and I were pleased to greet and congratulate those pastors with significant anniversaries at the Assembly. The bishop hosted a luncheon and I was pleased to present the pastors with their certificates. It was quite moving to hear the reflections of Pr Bob Willse (25 years), Pr Tim Kellgren(35 years) and Pr George Muedeking (65 years).

Finally, welcome to our new Team members: Mary Lou Petitjean and Nick Droge! A member will be named by the Synod Council for the position vacated by Pr Arden Strasser. We pray God's blessings on the Strasser family now in Africa.

Leadership Discipling Team

Chair

Pr Todd Bertani

District A

Vacant

District B

Ms Mary Lou Petitjean

District C

Dr. Margaret McLean

District D

Pr. Nancy Nelson

District E

Mr Nick Droge

At Large

Ms Karen Idler

At Large

Pr Mark Holmerud

Dean

Pr. Bob Andersen



Our Synod and the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH) is sponsoring a Palestinian Folkloric Dance Troupe with 4 Bay area performances: June 20, 7:30 pm at Santa Clara University, June 21, 7:30 at Julia Morgan Theater in Berkeley on College Avenue, June 22, 7:30 pm at St Matthew Lutheran Church 399 Wiget Lane in Walnut Creek, June 23 7:30 pm at Notre Dame University, 1500 Ralston Ave in Belmont. For information, call 510.677.6247 or 408.248.3257



Dr Paul Maier was the featured speaker at Peace Lutheran Church in Grass Valley. The May 13 seminar entitled Christianity and the Competition, drew over a hundred people. With dinner and 2 sessions, the evening included a "Holden Evening Prayer" worship. (Dr Maier is pictured with the Meyers family.)

Art/Faith

Interested in art and faith? Check out the Grunewald Guild's new web site www.artfaith.com. Upcoming events include a new Fall Program and artists in residence. Subscribe to a free monthly newsletter—email office@artfaith.com

Communion Ware at Synod Assembly

The communion ware on the altar and used by the bishop at distribution, is a gift to our synod from our sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. It is available for use in your congregation! Call Jean Fuller at the Office of the Bishop to reserve a date. 510.430.0500.



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.

Prayers for Healing: Dee Wright (Synod Resource Center) recovering from hand surgery.

Comfort of the gospel for: Pr Royen Yuen (Life Lutheran, Pinole) who is with his mother in Hong Kong; (as of this writing, she remains in a coma and is not expected to recover) Pr Don and Roberta Ranstrom, at the death of son Jeff, who died May 16. For the family of Pr Charles (Chuck) Daley, who died May 13 (he formerly served in this synod)

Prayers of thanksgiving for: the birth of Malachi John to Pr Barbara Foltin (St Paul's, Vallejo) and Todd Stiers in late April; and, to Pr Paul and Kathy Werfelmann, at the birth of granddaughter Camille (just prior to our Assembly)

ROSTER CHANGES

Marcia Brennan, to Associate, Our Savior's, Fresno

Congregations in transition

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

Congregation	Interim Pastor
Auburn, Bethlehem (2)	Dan Hodgson
Antioch, St John's (3)	
Elko, Faith (1)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection (2)	John Ridenour
Hollister, Trinity (3)	Frank Starkey
Livermore, Holy Cross (3)	Don Haven
Los Altos, Immanuel (1)	Jan Womer
Modesto, Emanuel	Roger Lee
Murphy's, Faith (4)	
Orangevale, Christ the King (3)	Kirk Shipley
Orinda, Lamorinda Korean (2)	Jae Guen Lee
Palo Alto, Grace (4)	John Kerr
Pleasant Hill, St Mark's (3)	Lyle Beckman
Reno, Good Shepherd (Associate) (3)	
Sacramento, Church of the Master (3)	Dick Smith
Sacramento, St John's (Associate) (2)	
San Jose, Immanuel (3)	Todd Charles
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)	
Santa Rosa, Thanksgiving (2)	Lorents Flak
Stockton, Zion (2)	Stan Niemi
Ukiah, Grace(2)	Allen Dunn

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

June

- 4 Day of Pentecost
- 20 Discipling Team Chairs/ Bishop's Staff Meeting
- 23-24 Synod Council Meeting



Closing worship: Bishop Mullen with Assisting Minister Stephanie Leong at left, at right Lector Rowena Henry, Diaconal Minister

July

- 2,3,4 Multicultural Youth Leadership & Definitely Abled Youth Leadership
- 5-16 Cruzando! ELCA Youth Gathering, San Antonio
- 29 Leadership Forum



At the podium: Pr Sharon Lubkeman and Pr Scot Sorensen, seated, presented Coaching for Healthy Congregations.



Pr Ruth Hanusa and VP Larry Moeller share a laugh at the Council dinner.

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