

# Praxis\*

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

## October 2006

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## A UNIQUE AND SPECIAL TIME!

Yes, what a unique and special time this is for hunger ministry! At the ELCA National Hunger Leaders Gathering in June, the news of Warren Buffet's pledge of "jaw-dropping generosity" was described in the Wall Street Journal. Great movements to help those in need are happening and we gratefully celebrated our own outstanding \$55 million in contributions to the Hunger and Disaster Appeals in 2005!

We celebrated our opportunities through the ELCA Hunger Appeal helps to overcome the scandalous human need around the world. The scandal is thousands of people dying daily from hunger related causes not because there is not enough food, but because there is not the political will to end hunger. In movements like the One Campaign and the efforts of others, there appears to be a swelling dynamic of concern and action. Our own Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, also the President of the Lutheran World Federation, gives powerful leadership in this movement and shared an inspiring message of gratitude and upcoming challenges. Through the Hunger Appeal we accompany those in need both internationally and locally.

But, the giving totals received to date for 2006 are down. In 2005 we saw the great potential. We are called to continue our efforts and go beyond 2005. The ELCA World Hunger Summer 2006 Resource Packet is full of excellent resources. The Synod Hunger Task Force is eager to assist congregations with further information or a speaking presentation. Contact Mary Clare James [maryj@ri-net.com](mailto:maryj@ri-net.com) (510) 522-6033 or Edie Lott: [thelotts@tlpc.org](mailto:thelotts@tlpc.org) (530) 582-5362.

Join us at the Hunger Ministry Workshop in Davis on November 4th, 2006. Details inside on Bulletin Board page.



Pictured above: Bp Hanson, Kathryn Sime, Director ELCA World Hunger & Disaster Appeal and Nancy Arnison, Director ELCA Hunger Program.



### BEYOND MINNESOTA NICE

*Pastor "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist*

**J**ust back from my lake cottage in Minnesota, I am reflecting on the custom of the "one finger on the steering wheel wave." Meet a vehicle, whether driving or walking, and you will usually see the locals raise the index finger, and move it from left to right, just above the steering wheel. I call it "the Minnesota wave."

The motivation is not clear to me. Is it "fear of being seen as unconcerned?" or a sense of "connectedness"? A "business ploy", or just "friendliness"?

Why do people give gifts of money to the Mission of Christ through our congregation?

A lot of reasons, I presume! For some, it may be simply the pressure to keep the "church" going. The "church" has the need to get! As opposed to the giver having the need to give!

"Where is Christ in all of this? Where is the "mission" Christ has given us to "...make disciples....?"

As a Christian force, we can limp into the future – simply seeking to stay afloat – or we can engage each day with the energy – and thus the conviction – that Christ is LIFE – ours and all others.

Why not "put our money where our mouth is." Which means that time and financial resources need to be poured into our Christ-given mission. And we need to be "INTENT" about

"speaking the truth in love...the truth about Jesus Christ – Savior and Lord."

Can we do it? Are we doing it? As a congregation, as a Synod, as a Churchwide body (the ELCA)?

Sorry, that's not the question! The question is: "Are YOU doing it? Are you insisting that your congregation is doing it – in your neighborhood, and through Mission Support of the Synod and Churchwide here, and across the world?"

Make it a full hand wave! The half-hearted index finger is never enough. Lutheran Nice it is not! God loves us, warts and all. So should each of us! Let our Mission Support express it – **BOLDLY**.

**A Full  
Wave!**

## Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod

There are about 15,000,000 people residing in our synodical territory. About 60% of that population, or 7,000,000 people are not claimed by any religious group at all! We're living and doing church in the middle of a huge mission field.

Almost all of us give at least lip service to "mission". But how do we do this work? There are many helpful ideas about approaches, but let's begin with basic understandings, lest we find ourselves rejecting evangelism as too far from our tradition!

There is in fact, a kind of evangelism that fits our Lutheran theological understanding. The **first principle** is this: we ourselves do not save anyone. We believe that the Holy Spirit works faith in and among whom the Spirit pleases. This is the other side of Luther's explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort come to Jesus Christ my Lord, or believe in him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel....in the same way the Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth."

What is our role? Well, it's not merely to sit in pews on Sunday mornings. Yet at the same time it's not our job to go out and "save" people. Let us pay attention to our theology. We believe that the Spirit actually does (and is doing) that work—not only in us, but out there in the world, stirring things up in human hearts and lives. Our role is not to argue anyone into the Christian faith, but is to be attentive to the people we know. Notice when it seems that the Spirit is opening up a heart, is nudging someone toward recognition of their need for the Holy, Merciful One. And then, at the right time, share a bit of our faith story, and extend an invitation to "come to church"(or, better yet, offer to bring them to worship).

That brings us to the **second principle**: We believe that in the gathering of the saints around Word and Sacraments, Christ is truly present. If someone is to learn of Christ, he or she will learn him best where Christ has promised to be: in the gathering of the people. In other words, inviting people to worship is evangelism in a good Lutheran key. It's nothing for which to apologize, as though a simple noticing and gentle invitation to come to church were something less than ideal. It is the way we "bring people to Christ."

Now the **third principle**: How in actuality does anyone become a Christian? There is only one sure sign: baptism. We become Christians, members of the one holy catholic and apostolic church at the moment we are baptized.

The **fourth principle**: A rising number of adult baptisms are the best sign of real evangelism occurring, as contrasted with just shuffling sheep around church to church. Adult baptisms are and will be the sign that we are taking seriously Jesus' Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all people, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In this mission field, let us pay attention to the mandate of our Savior.



### NEW CHARITABLE GIVING LAW

Margie Back, Synod Mission Interpreter Coordinator shares this news for those looking at the best use of their financial gifts:

In August of this year, a new tax law took effect, which created a new opportunity for charitable giving directly from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). If you have a retirement plan, these are the new rules affecting only the next two years:

1. You must be over 70-1/2 years of age.
2. This provision expires 12/31/07, so is available only in 2006 and 2007.
3. Up to \$100,000 per year may be transferred directly to a church or charitable organization without tax implications.
4. If your tax advisor has said that you have given all you can this year, this new law may present an opportunity to give an over-and-above gift not limited by other tax laws. Be sure and check!

### PASSING ON THE FAITH CONFERENCE

The Episcopal Diocese of California extends an invitation to participate in this exciting conference. Aimed at clergy, parents, grandparents, baptismal sponsors, faith mentors, Christian educators, youth, volunteers, anyone who touches the lives of the next generation is encouraged to attend. November 17-18 at Trinity Episcopal Church, Menlo Park. For more information and registration, go to [www.episcopalbayarea.org/passingonfaith](http://www.episcopalbayarea.org/passingonfaith)

### DIALOGUES IN FAITH AND SCIENCE

Dr. Ted Peters, Professor of Systematic Theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary will speak on "The Evolution Controversy: Who's fighting Whom About What?". Sunday, October 29, 4-6 p.m. at Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, 1701 Russell Blvd, Davis (one block west of Hwy. 113) No charge for the event- a free will offering will be received.

### An Inconvenient Truth

Here are various locations for seeing the film "An Inconvenient Truth"

**Resurrection, Oakland**, Friday, October 6 at 7 pm 397 Euclid Avenue 94610.

Popcorn, soft drinks and fair trade coffee will be served.

**St John's, Sacramento**, Sunday, October 8 from 5-8 pm with potluck. 1701 L St 95814

Free will offering for youth group projects.

**Holy Redeemer Lutheran**, San Jose, 1948 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126

Saturday, October 14 at noon

## **HUNGER WORKSHOP**

We are called! To end hunger in our time. Come learn how. Saturday, November 4 9:30a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Lutheran Church of the Incarnation in Davis. An optional social hour will follow. Timing of speakers will allow AMTRAK travel. Cost for the day is \$100. Seminarians and congregational contact persons attend free.

Featuring:

Nancy Arnison, Director of the ELCA World Hunger Program (Pictured on pg 1)

David Gist, California Coordinator of Bread for the World

Mary Ritter, with stories from Rwanda

Bible Study

Worship, fellowship, new hunger materials

African fair traded gift market

Parallel children's program

Questions and more information, [email thelotts@tipc.org](mailto:email_thelotts@tipc.org)

## **MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Five ELCA Missionaries call this synod "home" or have connections here. Sponsoring a missionary connects a congregation to those serving around the world. A brochure is available online to learn more about "The Changing Role of the Missionary." For information on how to sponsor a missionary, email [david.lerseth@elca.org](mailto:david.lerseth@elca.org)

Please pray for "our" missionaries:

Pastors James and Judith Bangsund serving in Tanzania since 1985 (home church, Holy Redeemer, San Jose)

Pastor Jeff and Mary Johnson serving in Guam since 2003

Drs. Holly and Tim Nelson serving in Cameroon since 2003

Pastor Samuel and Cynthia Wolff serving in Germany since 1980 (home church, St Paul's, Oakland)

Rev Dr. Richard Young serving in Guyana since 2001 (home church Faith Lutheran, Elko, Nevada)



[prayers@spselca.org](mailto: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](mailto:prayers@spselca.org) or call us. Remember to practice forgiveness when we err and let us know about errors and omissions.

**Prayers for Healing:** **Pr Victor Berg-Haglund** recovering from surgery from injuries sustained in a car accident; **Ann Brannen** (Synod Council member) recovering from hip surgery; **Pr Mary Sanders** (Shepherd of the Valley, Galt) recovering from minor surgery; **Joan Moren**, wife of Pr John Moren, recovering from knee surgery; **Pr Roger Bauer**, recovering from treatment for blood clots.

**Comfort of the gospel to:** **Pr Al Cassel**, at the death of his mother, Aileen; the family, friends and colleagues mourning the death of **Pr James Lokken; Pr Bonnie and Clint Bell** at the death of grandson Gabriel; **Pr Tim Huff**, at the death of his step-father.

## ROSTER CHANGES:

**C. Lynn Bailey** from South Carolina Synod, to Immanuel, San Jose  
**Linda Boston**, to Lutheran Social Services  
**Pamela Griffith Pond**, to East May Alliance for Sustainable Economy  
**Patricia Higgins**, from North Dakota Synod, to Lutheran Church of the Master, Sacramento  
**Dawn Teuthorn**, to St Jude's Episcopal, Cupertino

## Congregations in transition

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

Congregation	Interim Pastor
Arcata, Arcata (3)	
Auburn, Bethlehem (2)	Dan Hodgson
Citrus Heights, Ascension (Associate) (2)	
Elko, Faith (2)	Beverly Jensen
Fairfax, Christ	
Fresno, Immanuel(Associate) (3)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection (4)	John Ridenour
Hollister, Trinity (2)	Frank Starkey
Livermore, Holy Cross (3)	
Los Altos, Immanuel (2)	Jan Womer
Mariposa, Mariposa (1)	
Modesto, Emanuel (2)	Roger Lee
Orinda, Lamorinda Korean (2)	Jae Guen Lee
Reno, Good Shepherd(Associate) (3)	
St John's (Assoc) (3)	Todd Eckblad
San Francisco, Our Savior	Ron Moore
San Jose, Grace	
San Leandro, St James	
San Jose, Immanuel (4)	Todd Charles
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)	
San Mateo, Hope (3)	David Ernat
Santa Rosa, Thanksgiving (2)	Lorents Flak
Stockton, Zion (3)	Stan Niemi
Ukiah, Grace (3)	Allen Dunn

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

## October

- 5-10 Conference of Bishops
- 20-22 High School Event, Mt Cross
- 23-24 Council of Deans
- 23-24 Women Clergy Retreat
- 24-26 Professional Leaders Retreat



Pr Adisa Armand Miller attended the ELCA Pastor Developer Training in September. She Serves United Lutheran in Oakland.

## November

- 1 All Saints Day
- 2 Sacramento Conference Assembly
- 3-4 Tri-Synod Campus Ministry Board
- 4 Sierra San Joaquin Conference Assembly
- 5 Redwood Conference Assembly, Monterey Bay Conference Assembly
- 10 Birthday of Dr Martin Luther
- 10-11 Spouses of Clergy Retreat
- 11 Evangelical Lutheran Worship Introductory Event
- 12 Foothill Conference Assembly



Pr Cora Aguilar of Messiah in Hayward, enjoys a chat with Pr Bud Egdahl, Stewardship Specialist, as the recent Synod Council meeting.



Kenn Inskip, Director of the ELCA's Department for Research & Evaluation chats with Carlton Holte, member of Word & Sacrament Discipling Team at the recent gathering of all 3 discipling teams and Bp Mullen and staff.



The 2006 new members of the Synod Council: Michelle Martin (Dist D) , Tom Beck (Dist B), Cora Aguilar (at large), Steve Krefting (Dist C), Pat Cash (Dist A)

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To receive the Synod weekly e-mail, "Byte of Synod" send a note to [info@spselca.org](mailto:info@spselca.org)