

Praxis

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

April 2007

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Ribbon Cutting in Tulare



Pr Rick Kristoff handles the scissors at First Lutheran . Members joined with local Chamber of Commerce representatives to celebrate the grand opening. (Photo courtesy of the Tulare Chamber of Commerce)

The folks at First Lutheran Church in Tulare began talking about the need for child care some twenty years ago. That led to taking on the work of planning and following through with more hard work. Through prayer and all that hard work, the exciting opening of the First Lutheran Church Day Care Center in Tulare has now taken place. The city is growing and so are the needs for affordable child care. What an exciting and fulfilling time for the congregation as it continues its outreach into the local community. Congratulations to Pr Kristoff and members. Well done good and faithful servants!

(Does your congregation have a ministry story to share for the Praxis front page? Email info@spselca.org)

Stewardship



Pr Lauren "Bud" Egdahl

**A Better Way
of
Life!**

“...long before the fashions came.”

1. Pr Lauren “Bud” Egdahl, Stewardship Specialist

Remember the old song about a woman’s name that segments of society were pronouncing in a new way, but the singer will stick with plain old and simple “Mary?”

Stewardship is that kind of word. Long history, solid reputation, important relationship and all the rest. Not that anyone is trying to change it.

There are “in” words today, of course. For instance, what used to be “trucking co.” or “truck lines” now show up as “logistics.” Look at the semi-s on the road and you’ll see it – regularly.

And in church parlance, the same thing. Somewhere back in the past 40 years we suddenly began to here the phrase “in mission.” It showed up everywhere and constantly. In today’s church, listen for “accompany” and “capacity” as examples of the latest.

I’m thankful that no new catchword replaces “stewardship” in our Christian community. It’s a great word.

What is even better is that it sums up and expresses a profound way of life. To recognize that God has gifted us with all that we are and have – and all creation around us – is to live with a sense of deep gratitude to God, and honest responsibility toward all, that cuts across every aspect of our world and our relationship to it and to one another.

Some folks only think of a narrow version of the word spelled like this: \$teward\$hip. It involves that, of course. Jesus talked about the “M ” word more than anything except the “Kingdom of God.” And four times more than He talked about prayer. So, yes, it’s a big one in our lives as stewards of God’s gifts.

And my experience tells me that when we get that one right in our lives, then we will hold, care for, and use all the rest of God’s gifts with an ease and excitement that underscores the true meaning of that great word: Stewardship. It’s a grand old word! It’s a better way of life!

The Bishop

Welcome to Baptism

Bishop David G. Mullen



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

I am glad to find in our new worship resource, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, the brief rite called “Welcome to Baptism”, designed especially for adults who are inquiring about and wishing to explore the faith and what life in the church might mean for them.

That rite is an evangelical resource for congregations identifying Lent as the season for focusing on deeper catechesis and public blessing of adult seekers. In the yearly Lenten practice of welcoming seekers and praying that they will be led to Holy Baptism (at the Easter Vigil, for example), congregations recall that they themselves are blessed with new lives as baptized children of God.

“Welcome to Baptism” suggests that those who are willing to begin a public (though initially tentative) relationship with church stand with their sponsors at the entrance to the church sanctuary. The presiding minister says: “Dear friends, we gather today with these people who have been called by God’s Spirit to inquire into the Christian faith and life. Together, let us welcome them to this community of faith in Jesus Christ.”

Note the good theology: it is the Holy Spirit who works in the lives of people, creating in them a felt need for God and the church, which in the initial stages may be only a vague sense of longing for “something more in my life.” Our role is not to convert people on the spot by use of persuasive talking points, but is to be attentive and inviting and supportive to them in their journey. This is how we engage in “making disciples.”

Back to the rite: with the Spirit’s guidance and our gentle encouragement, seekers thus have arrived at the door to the church, where they are presented by name by their sponsors. The congregation is asked, “People of God, will you help these people hear the gospel of Jesus Christ within this household of faith?” And the congregation answers, “We will, and we ask God to help us.” Later in the rite the seekers may be marked with the sign of the cross, a foretaste of what is to come in Holy Baptism. At the end of the welcoming rite these words are spoken to the seekers: “God bring you in peace and joy to fullness of life in Christ and call you to the waters of Baptism. May the God of all grace, who has called you to glory, support you and make you strong.” This is truly evangelical, disciple-making, liturgy!

And that leads to me say once again: There are many joys in faith-full living, but the greatest joy is to welcome those longing for God into the life of Christ. Blessed, joyous, Easter, saints of God!

Resources

Resources for “Going Green”

Looking for a way to encourage and educate folks on how Christians care for creation?

A four-session small group study is available at no cost from www.elca.org/stewardship/teaching

Already have an active Caring for Creation committee or task force? We’d like to hear from you. Email info@spselca.org or call 800.275.3522 and tell us about what’s happening. Thanks!



A community of global companions—that’s the ELCA’s Global Mission Event.

Be equipped for global ministry at this first class skill-building event!



Programming for all ages, including a kids friendly space for children three to ten. A mix of peer activities and GME participation encourages junior and senior high youth to expand their understanding of their world, their faith, and their culture.

For program details, visit www.elcaorg/gme



How Little Are Your Lutherans?

Children up to the age of six years will enjoy receiving the [Little Lutheran](http://www.thelutheran.org) in their own names. This new venture gives children you love 10 issues a year filled with art, stories, prayers, songs, activities and much more. It's like a good hug from a parent, a grandparent, a godparent, a good friend. Go to www.thelutheran.org Look for the little Lutheran at left.



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

P ayers for healing;

Pr Brian Oltman (on leave from call) recovering from surgery; **Pr Herbert Anderson**, recovering from hip surgery at home at PLTS;

C omfort of the gospel to:

Pr Donna Duensing at the death of her sister Lavada in March; to the family of **Pr Gilbert Jensen**, who died April 2.

Congregations in Transition

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

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Interim Pastor</u>
Arcata, Arcata (3)	
Auburn, Bethlehem (3)	Dan Hodgson
Citrus Heights, Advent (Associate)(2)	
Citrus Heights , Ascension(Associate)(3)	
Elko, Faith (2)	Beverly Jensen
Fairfax, Christ (1)	Terry Hamilton-Poore
Fresno, Immanuel(Associate) (3)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection(2)	John Ridenour
Los Altos, Immanuel(3)	Jan Womer
Mariposa, Mariposa(2)	Kirk Shipley
Merced, Shepherd of the Valley (2)	Carl Bengston
Modesto, Emanuel(2)	Roger Lee
Oakland, Bethlehem (2)	Larry Quanbeck
Petaluma, Elim (Outreach& Discipleship)(3)	
Richmond, Grace (2)	
Rio Linda, Calvary(2)	Bruce Johnson
Sacramento, Good Shepherd (Sr)	Russ Creydt
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)	
San Leandro, St James (2)	Ruth Leshner
Santa Rosa, Bethlehem(Assoc-Youth & Family)(2)	
Santa Rosa, Thanksgiving (4)	
Stockton, Zion (3)	Stan Niemi

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

Synod Calendar

April

- 2 Chrism Mass, Our Savior's, Lafayette
- 6 Good Friday
- 8 Resurrection of Our Lord
- 18 Synod Council
Council of Deans
- 19-21 Synod Assembly, Reno
- 24-16 First Call Theological Education

May

- 3-10 Bishop's visit to Taiwan, Companion Synod
- 12 Commencement, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Word & Sacrament Team
- 17 Ascension Day
- 27 Pentecost

Synod Assembly April 19-21, Reno

Living in God's Amazing Grace:

Thanks be to God!

For information on registering and hotel reservations, go to www.spselca.org
An Assembly Handbook (in sections) is also available for downloading.

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www.spselca.org

by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA.

Rev F Noreen Meginness, Editor

Rev David G Mullen, Bishop