

# Praxis\*

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

**January 2007**

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# 2007 Views of Congregations



*Children's worship at Advent in Citrus Heights  
photo by Kathy Hamm*



*Children's choir at  
Lord of Life in Clovis*



*Sunday evening worship "Crossings" at Davis Lutheran in Davis  
It's easy to travel the synod via websites!  
Go to [www.spselca.org](http://www.spselca.org), click on the  
**Congregations** tab to roam the territory  
without having to drive anywhere.*



### A SMORSGASBORD OF CHOICES

*Pastor "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist*

**I**n 38 years of parish ministry I don't remember anyone standing in line to be on the Stewardship Committee. Oh, we always ended up with someone, and they did a good job, but it certainly wasn't their first choice of how to serve.

The second observation is that, though elected in January, they spent the year thinking about what kind of response method to use for the fall stewardship time.

Most of our congregations will be having elections now, and here are some choices to help people want to be on the Stewardship committee and with the selection of a response method.

**WALK WITH JESUS!** New, written for small and mid-size congregations. Four week, biblically based, straight-forward and easy to use. Materials in both a booklet and on a CD. Response is done as a part of worship.

**STEWARDSHIP IN THE SMALL MEMBERSHIP RURAL/URBAN CONGREGATION.** (100 or fewer attendance) A three week emphasis on "Faithful, Hopeful, Loving" and materials for a six part study on biblical stewardship principles. Response at worship.

**WE SAY YES!** Centers on small-group Bible studies with a commitment response at worship. Comes with lots of support materials for all age groups.

**NEW CONSECRATION SUNDAY.** Program Kit guides each step of the way. Requires a guest leader. Response is at worship, followed by a celebration luncheon.

**GIVING** An annual magazine each congregation receives each year. Each issue contains a response method plus articles on stewardship and book reviews. 2006 issue response method is "Common Hope, Common Trust." Also available is a set of the first five issues response method. Call Ecumenical Stew. Center 1-800/835-5671

All others available through Augsburg Fortress! As Churchill said, "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

**WALK  
WITH  
JESUS!**

## Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod

*Mark 6: 30-34 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*



Christian ministry is about compassion for people, and compassion is truly needed. The brokenness of humanity is evident every day in many ways. Both inside and outside the church the woes of humanity are expressed as a large crowd of desperation. The call of the church is to hear what is beneath the anxious, angry, demanding cries. So great is the crowding need for direction and life, that caring people, faithful Christians, approach exhaustion and burn out.

Jesus recognized that in himself and in his disciples. Ushering in the new form of the reign of God was and is not an easy task. With a vision of the great shalom God intends as blessing for the world, the resistance of people to the good news that would mean for them salvation (healing and deep peace) makes ministry a hard task. The need to "come away" for a time with Christ needs to be honored and acted on.

Having just been on a retreat with the Council of Deans, fresh in my mind is just this great need on the part of those engaged in ministry to have time away. We spent 24 hours with Dr. Herb Anderson, who helped us appreciate what Gary Gunderson is calling "The Leading Causes of Life". In a world of so much brokenness and focus on the manifold forms of death, how refreshing and renewing it is to see again sign of life and hope in the midst of the struggles to remain faithful and helpful.

Life is what Christ was about-the abundant life, as he states in St. John's gospel. The example of Christ, the disciples, and experience of the saints throughout history, is that time away is essential lest we ourselves allow that abundant to be drained away, and end up in hopeless and despair.

At the beginning of this new year, remember that the call of Christ is not only to serve, but is also, as in Mark 6, a call to "come away"-to go on retreat, if only for a day. In such time away with Christ we find rest for our bodies and souls, refocus our attention to what is truly important, and are blessed with renewal for the sake of the gospel.

For the "crowds" will ever be with us. And our call is to have compassion on them, for they are like sheep without a shepherd. Retreats in the presence of Christ and with thers renew us in faith, courage, and hope for the world.

## Lutheran World Federation

The ELCA is a member church of the LWF, along with 139 Lutheran church bodies in 78 countries. The ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson is the current president of the LWF.

### In the Heart of Africa

Hermine Nikolaisen's Overview of LWF's Work in Rwanda and the DRC

KIGALI, Rwanda, 15 December 2006– By evening, she will have reached Goma city in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Hermine Nikolaisen, reckons it takes about three hours from the Rwandan capital Kigali to Goma..

Nikolaisen comes from near Munich, Germany. She started work in Rwanda in November 2005, and has seen much of the of the "Land of a Thousand Hills." She is the representative of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) and director of the Kigali-based LWF/DWS country program in Rwanda and the DRC.

#### Building Upon Local Experience

Together with a team of 60 local colleagues, Nikolaisen heads several projects in both countries. She is optimistic about the work. The projects provide a long-term contribution toward improving living standards. She points out that the fight against poverty remains the major priority: "We can't talk about peace and reconciliation in Rwanda and the DRC while people don't have enough to eat."

#### It's Not About More Money

Malnourished children are targeted by the LWF program through feeding centers. "It's not more

money that we need here in Gitarama – just more time," she says, referring to the training center for women.

"Sometimes one needs real patience, because projects cannot always be completed within two years," she adds.

Before her current position, Nikolaisen, 60, had spent 12 years in the Balkans. She worked as a volunteer with the LWF Mauritania program, then on to Namibia. She worked with the LWF's operations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, then spent two years in Kenya, before taking the position of director of the Kosovo program for 5 years. She has seen conflict both between Christians and Muslims and between people from different ethnic groups in one country.

#### Rwanda

After the genocide, LWF provided emergency aid to victims and displaced persons. Returning refugees needed shelter, then reconstruction of schools, health services and water systems began. Later efforts focused on empowering communities to achieve self-sufficiency. The approach emphasized capacity building of local partners and community-based organizations, and addressed issues of HIV and AIDS, the environment, peace and reconciliation, and emergency preparedness.

More information about the LWF's work in Rwanda and the DRC at: [www.lutheranworld.org/What\\_We\\_Do/DWS/Country\\_Programs/DWS-Rwanda-DRC.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DWS/Country_Programs/DWS-Rwanda-DRC.html)



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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: Earna Mikulasek**, wife of **Pr Ken Mikulasek**, recovering from brain surgery

**Comfort of the gospel to: Pr Al Schoonover** and family at the death of his father in December; the family of retired **Pr Anker M. Jensen**, who died in December. **Pr David Flakoll** and family at the death of his mother at Christmas.

### ROSTER CHANGES:

**Matthew Prasek**, to Trinity, Hollister  
**Wi Kook Min**, to Lamorinda Korean Community Church  
**Frank Espegren**, St. John's - Sacramento

### Congregations in transition

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

#### Congregation

*listed* Arcata, Arcata (4)  
Auburn, Bethlehem (3)  
Citrus Heights, Ascension (Associate) (3)  
Elko, Faith (2)  
Fairfax, Christ (1)  
Fresno, Immanuel Associate (3)  
Granite Bay, Resurrection (3)  
Hollister, Trinity (4)  
Livermore, Holy Cross (4)  
Los Altos, Immanuel (3)  
Mariposa, Mariposa (2)  
Modesto, Emanuel (2)  
Oakland, Bethlehem (2)  
Sacramento, Good Shepherd (Sr)  
San Jose, Grace  
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)  
San Leandro, St James (2)  
San Mateo, Hope (4)  
Stockton, Zion (3)  
Ukiah, Grace (3)

#### Interim Pastor

Dan Hodgson  
Beverly Jensen  
Frank Starkey  
Lori Eichmann  
Jan Womer  
Kirk Shipley  
Roger Lee  
Ruth Leshner  
David Ernat  
Stan Niemi  
Allen Dunn.

# Synod Calendar

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## January

2-3 Council of Deans Retreat  
6 Evangelical Lutheran Worship Workshop,  
Faith Lutheran, Santa Rosa  
6-11 ELCA Bishop's Academy, Chicago  
9 Nominating Committee, Synod Office  
16 Synod Assembly Planning Committee, Reno  
19-21 Confirmation Retreat, Mt Cross  
20 Word & Sacrament Discipling Team  
26/27 Synod Council, Mercy Center,  
Burlingame

## February

2-4 Global Mission Fiesta, Phoenix  
3 Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)  
Workshop, Good Shepherd, Sacramento  
10 ELW Workshop, Pacific Lutheran Theological  
Seminary, Berkeley  
19-20 Clergy & Spouses Retreat, Asilomar

## Synod Team leads introductory event in Fresno.



*Pictured are (left to right) Pr Lucy Kolin, Marji DuBois, Pr Sandra Dager. Other team members are Pr Marty Schaefer, Georga Allen, Len Scaramuzzo*



*Next picture--- The event at Hope in Fresno drew an enthusiastic crowd. Next introductory events are: January 6 at Faith, Santa Rosa; February 3 at Good Shepherd, Sacramento; February 10 at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley. For more information and to register, go to [www.spselca.org](http://www.spselca.org)*

*PRAXIS is produced monthly (except July) and posted at the web site [www.spselca.org](http://www.spselca.org) by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA.*

*Pr. F. Noreen Meginness, Editor, Bob Stewart, layout. Items may be submitted for consideration by the 1st of the preceding month.*

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