

## MINISTRY TEAMS

### CONNECTION BUILDING MINISTRY TEAM

The Connection Building Ministry Team continues to focus on the use of the web as a means of keeping information between the synod and the congregations flowing. Our goal of “paperless mailings” is becoming a closer reality in that this year the monthly synod mailing to congregations was reduced to 5 pages that include “Thanks to you” bulletin inserts, the reproducible Synod News, roster updates, “The Parish Paper” and a summary sheet of announcements with reference to where more information can be found on the synod website, [www.godsove.org](http://www.godsove.org).

Aware that not every congregation has internet access, the Connection Building Ministry Team is investigating a program to assist congregations without access to become connected to the internet. Still in the information gathering stage, the team expects to make contact with congregations and have them online within the year.

As always, the Connection Building Ministry Team looks to encourage, support, and engage inter-congregational connections, not only lines of communication and information, but also the building up of the body of Christ.

*Roxi Kringle, convener*

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY TEAM

The Leadership Development Ministry Team continued to meet the challenge of fulfilling the synodical priority “*We will develop leaders for a new church in a new world.*” This priority continues to provide exciting conversations throughout the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. We invite you to share in the discussion of how this team can continue developing quality leaders for the Church.

#### 1. *Help congregations to identify, equip and support lay leaders*

- The team supports a “Volunteer Coordinator” Task Force to provide training and support to congregations of the synod that are exploring or implementing the Volunteer coordinator model for ministry.
- The team supports a biannual workshop for Congregational Council secretaries to equip them with the necessary information and

- skills that they need for ministry in their congregational setting.

#### 2. *Equip and support rostered and other leaders for ministry needs*

- The team supports a grant process for rostered leaders to match continuing education funds.
- The team works in partnership with Family Life Service to provide continuing education opportunities on the territory of the synod.
- The team along with the Compensation Guidelines Task Force is working on revising salary guidelines for rostered leaders to be revealed during the 2008 synod assembly. Discussion concerning this radical shift in salary guidelines will be encouraged throughout the year.
- The team held a grant writing workshop with exciting results!

#### 3. *Intentionally seek out candidates for rostered leadership*

- The team supports the Theological Education with Youth (TEY) program through scholarships available to NEPS youth attending the Summer Theological Academy. The team continues to strengthen ties with the TEY programs.
- The team commits itself to representation at every synodical youth event for the sake of sharing in conversation about discernment.
- The team continues to be in conversation and partnership with Don Johnson concerning Project Connect. Project Connect is a program of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries and is funded by the Lilly Endowment. It’s purpose is to encourage young adults to consider a vocation in public ministry.
- The team is in dialogue with Southeast Pennsylvania synod in creating a leadership camp for high school students. At this time our goal is to have the leadership camp ready for the summer of 2007.

#### 4. *Provide or insure support for the families of rostered leaders*

- The team held a one day pre-retirement workshop on our territory for rostered leaders

Many thanks to the current team members for their hard work and dedication to developing leaders for a new church in a new world; the Rev. Kathy Ash-Flashner, the Rev. Paul Braden, the Rev. Peter Bredllau, the Rev. Tom Cvammen, George Fennell, Guy French, the Rev. Kurt Garbe, Theresa Kissling, Ben Larson, Jairia To-

bash, Susan Wambaugh and the Rev. Mark Wimmer.

A special thanks to Elizabeth Elterich, AiM and Leslie Wagner for their faithful service to this team since "The beginning!" We will miss Elizabeth's wonderful sense of hospitality and Leslie's creative genius.

*Kathleen M. Schaeffer, convener*

## 2008 MINIMUM COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

At the request of the 1983 convention of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, LCA, the former Professional Development Committee created annual "*Minimum Base Salary Guidelines*" for pastors and lay professional leaders. The following guidelines are recommended by the Leadership Development Team for the approval of the 2007 Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA.

### PARISH PASTORS 2008 Minimum Salary Guidelines

**Resolved that:**

**1) The 2008 *minimum* base salary for pastors in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:**

Years completed service in ordained ministry	Recommended Salary Range (including housing allowance)		Recommended Salary Range (parsonage provided)	
0 - 1	45,000	-	49,500	31,000 - 34,100
2 - 3	46,000	-	50,600	32,000 - 35,200
4 - 7	47,000	-	51,700	33,000 - 36,300
8 - 10	49,000	-	53,900	35,000 - 38,500
11 - 15	50,500	-	60,600	36,500 - 40,150
16 - 20	53,000	-	63,600	39,000 - 46,800
21 +	55,500	-	72,150	41,500 - 53,950

These figures include a **Social Security Allowance** equal to one half of the pastor's social security liability. This allowance is taxable for income tax purposes. For 2007, the Social Security liability is expected to be equal to 15.3% of the combined base salary and housing provision. (Parsonages are subject to the fair rental value of the house for tax purposes).

**2) It is the responsibility of each congregation to provide housing for its pastor(s). This may be accomplished in either of two ways:**

**a) Housing Allowance. A portion of the pastor's salary may be designated as a housing allowance. This amount will vary, depending upon location and the needs of the pastor. Congregations and pastors should check current tax laws in establishing this figure. This amount should be established before the beginning of each year by a resolution of the Congregation Council or the listing of an amount in the congregation's budget.**

**b) Parsonage. This is free use of a church-owned house, including utilities. A portion of the pastor's base salary may be set aside for furnishings and other housing expenses according to the IRS code. An annual equity allowance of a minimum of 3%-5% of salary is recommended for all parsonage situations.**

- 3) Congregations should remember that the figures in the grid are *minimum*. Congregations are encouraged to exceed these minimum guidelines. Additional compensation should be provided based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.
- 4) Each congregation shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to facilitate the discussion by which these criteria are evaluated (as well as for carrying out the other functions of mutual ministry).
- 5) A congregation that fails to meet the synodical guidelines shall submit a report to the bishop on a form to be provided, detailing the reasons why these minimums are not being met and the steps that will be taken to establish these minimums as soon as possible.

The following minimum benefits should be provided in addition to salary:

- 1) An Automobile Allowance equal to IRS guidelines per mile for business travel. Pastors reimbursed for auto expense on a per mile basis do not have to report this allowance as income if they submit written mileage to the calling institution.
- 2) **Continuing Education** provisions including a congregation/agency providing at least \$550 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time (not vacation), and the pastor providing at least \$250. It is recommended that this money be deposited in the synod's PACE program. (Programs that include Sundays must be negotiated with the congregation council.) It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and pastors work towards a partnership goal of \$1,000.
- 3) Four full weeks of **vacation** time annually.
- 4) One to two **days off** per week, and, at least once a month, two consecutive days off.
- 5) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, pastors are considered to be employees of the congregation and therefore should be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.
- 6) **Health and pension benefits** according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.
- 7) Congregations may also reimburse the pastor(s) for **professional expenses** such as dues, entertainment, supplies, and malpractice insurance.

### PASTORS WITH PART TIME CALLS

Pastors with part time calls should be compensated on a prorated basis in line with the above guidelines, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop. Vacation and continuing education provisions should be prorated, as well. Pension and health benefits are according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.

### ROSTERED LAY PROFESSIONALS 2008 Minimum Salary Guidelines

Resolved that:

- 1) The 2008 *minimum* salary for rostered lay professionals in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:

Years completed service in rostered ministry	Recommended Salary Range Bachelor's Degree		Recommended Salary Range Master's Degree	
0 – 1	28,500	- 31,350	31,200	- 34,320
2 – 3	29,500	- 32,450	32,200	- 35,420
4 – 7	30,500	- 33,550	33,200	- 36,520
8 – 10	32,500	- 35,750	35,200	- 38,720
11 – 15	34,000	- 40,800	36,700	- 44,040
16 – 20	36,500	- 43,800	39,200	- 47,040
21 +	39,000	- 50,700	41,700	- 54,210

2) Congregations should remember that the figures in the grid are *minimum*. Congregations are encouraged to exceed these minimum guidelines. Additional compensation should be provided based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.

3) Each congregation shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to facilitate the discussion by which these criteria are evaluated (as well as for carrying out the other functions of mutual ministry).

4) A congregation that fails to meet the synodical guidelines shall submit a report to the bishop on a form to be provided, detailing the reasons why these minimums are not being met and the steps that will be taken to establish these minimums as soon as possible.

The following *minimum* benefits should be provided in addition to salary:

1) An **Automobile Allowance** equal to IRS guidelines per mile for business travel. Rostered lay leaders reimbursed for auto expense on a per mile basis do not have to report this allowance as income if they submit written mileage to the calling institution.

2) **Continuing Education** provisions including a congregation/agency providing at least \$550 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time (not vacation), and the leader providing at least \$250. It is recommended that this money be deposited in the synod's PACE program. (Programs that include Sundays must be negotiated with the congregation council.) It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and rostered lay professional leaders work towards a partnership goal of \$1,000.

3) Four full weeks of **vacation** time annually.

4) One to two **days off** per week, and, at least once a month, two consecutive days off.

5) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, rostered lay professional leaders are considered to be employees of the congregation and therefore should be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.

6) **Health and pension benefits** according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.

7) Congregations may also reimburse the lay professional leader(s) for **professional expenses** such as dues, entertainment, supplies, and malpractice insurance.

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### WITNESS AND SERVICE MINISTRY TEAM

After many years of leadership from Woody Maxon, a good part of 2006 was spent assimilating new team members and reorganizing the team. All this occurred while we were continuing to review grant applications and discern our role in the synod.

The Witness and Service team reviewed three rounds of grant applications and awarded over \$30,000 in grants throughout the year! It is inspiring to read about the creative ways congregations are reaching into their communities to serve and to witness. These grants create opportunities for all congregations to have equal access to funds for outreach and mission.

In October, the Witness and Service Team, along with Diakon Social Ministry, Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital, Lutheran Congregational Services and Muhlenberg College sponsored the "Celebrate Social Ministry" dinner event at the

Holiday Inn in Fogelsville. The evening was alive with stories of imaginative and inspired people and congregations who have taken Christ's command to love God and love your neighbor seriously. It is wonderful to be able to recognize these ministries that set an example for all of us. In 2007 we will see a change of location for this event from Holiday Inn to Muhlenberg College.

This year, the team was asked to review applications and make recommendations for ELCA domestic hunger grants. It is amazing the number of congregations that recognize the needs in their own communities and seek to find ways to "feed" God's children.

As a team, we are continuing to discern our mission of service and evangelism in this synod. It is a privilege to serve with the other committed individuals on the team: Barbara Davis, Don Dillman, Amy Jahn, Keith Rohrbach and Mary Wolfe.

*Jami Possinger, convener*

## WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY MINISTRY TEAM

The Worship and Spirituality Team has had an exciting year. We have watched as the events we dreamed and planned for have or soon will become realities.

First, what was known as “The Renewing Worship Project” has become Evangelical Lutheran Worship. We celebrate the six workshops that were held around our synod. These workshops have excited 57 NEP Synod congregations to purchase the new worship book. Many thanks to the facilitators of these workshops. They are Michael Krentz, Rändel Wolfe, Charlie Grube, Dale Zmijewski, Roxi Kringle, Martha Sipe, Linda Maule and Tom Yenser.

Next, as the LIFT event draws near, we thank Judy and Herb Gifford and Ruth and Ken Miller for agreeing to spearhead this project and for inspiring their large and talented committee to plan this amazing day. Nearly 60 workshops will be presented along with keynote speaker Bart Campolo and the musical group Bread for the Journey. Go to [www.godslove.org/LIFT](http://www.godslove.org/LIFT) for complete details and mark June 9, 2007 on your calendars.

The third event we are watching with anticipation is the revival of Worship Days scheduled for October 20, 2007. Stan Trout heads this event and Robert Rimbo will be the keynoter. We look forward to worship leadership folks from around the synod coming together to learn about a multitude of issues related to Lutheran worship.

The Leadership Program for Musicians in Small Congregations is still in the planning process. Rändel Wolfe and Beverly Eiche-Kriner are at the forefront of this project.

Our team members continue to write articles posted on the synod website each month. These articles are of interest to both lay and rostered leaders in the areas of worship and spirituality.

The team is also here to help your congregation with any programs that you want to do in the areas of worship and spiritual growth. We have grant monies available and the application form is on the synod website.

Lastly, our team has welcomed four new members this year. They are Randle and Jira Albers, Wes Poole and Barbara Shade. Leaving the team in May, 2007 are Laura Csellak, Michael Krentz and Nancy Bleam.

*Nancy Bleam, convener*

## ACCESSIBILITY MINISTRIES TEAM The “A Team”

*Believing that people with disabilities are valued as individuals, having been created in the image of God, redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and called & empowered by the Holy Spirit; and*

*Knowing that all people with & without mental, physical, & sensory challenges need to be able to practice their faith & use their unique gifts in worship, service, learning, & leadership;*

*We will encourage & assist all congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA to open their hearts, minds, & doors to all God's people by removing barriers of architecture, communication, & attitudes that exclude any person from full & active participation in the life of Christ's Church.*

In fulfilling this mission in 2006-2007, our ministry team:

- Promoted Accessibility Ministries Sunday, generally observed on the second Sunday in October, with synod E-mail messages and observance suggestions & resources posted on the synod website;
- Provided a representative to the synod's LIFT Planning Committee, and worked to develop a multifaceted workshop for that event in June 2007;
- Participated in the synod's Learning Ministries Day by having a display of resource materials on accessibility and leading a workshop on including & teaching those who struggle with Asperger's Syndrome & other autism spectrum disorders;
- Added several new Team members, even as our longtime convener Mary Smith needed to withdraw from more active participation due to health reasons;
- Continued to work on the development of a website displaying accessibility accomplishments by synod congregations, appealing to all congregations for pictures & stories of their ministries to, for, by, & with people with disabilities; and
- Provided a display at the Synod Assembly including materials, resource people, & contact help for accessibility issues.

We continue to offer resources to help congregations assess & address their accessibility

challenges. We invite you to join us in this adventure of faith & discovery as together we seek to "make a way" for others to come and see Jesus among us.

*David Heckler, convener*

## CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

This year, the Candidacy Committee continued to provide care and guidance for individuals preparing to become pastors, associates in ministry or diaconal ministers. In 2006-07, forty candidates were involved in the candidacy process. Thanks to your Mission Support and grants from the Student Education and Prosser funds, over \$56,000 was spent to help our students in the preparation process. Thank you to all the congregations who made special gifts this year.

Again, I am grateful to the members of the committee for their work with our candidates. This year, Pastor Cindy Camp completed ten years with the Candidacy Committee, and I am grateful for her service.

In August, 2006, the Candidacy Committee approved Brian R. Holben and Suzanne M. Trump as candidates for ordination, pending the receipt and acceptance of a proper call.

**Brian R. Holben** is a member of St. Timothy, Allentown. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Richmond, Richmond, VA in 1986, a Master of Education degree from Kutztown University, Kutztown in 1992, a Master of Divinity degree from Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem in 2001, and a Master of Sacred Theology degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 2004. He completed several quarters of Clinical Pastoral Education at the Lehigh Valley Hospital, and did internship at Christ, Hellertown. He also served under supervision at St. Paul (Blue Church) in Coopersburg.

**Suzanne M. Trump** is a member of St. John, Fogelsville. She received a Bachelor of Sciences degree from Temple University, Philadelphia in 1985, a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1992, and a Master of Arts in Religion degree from Temple University in 2002. She completed two quarters of Clinical Pastoral Education at the Lehigh Valley Hospital, and did internship at St. Peter, Line Lexington.

In January, 2007, the Candidacy Committee approved Kelly L. Howard and Linda S. Zawaski as candidates for consecration as diaconal ministers, pending receipt and acceptance of a proper call.

**Kelly L. Howard** is a member of Nativity, Allentown. She received a Bachelor of Sciences degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN in 1995, and a Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling from Moravian Seminary, Bethlehem in 2005. Kelly affiliated with the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg for her training. She completed quarters of Clinical Pastoral Education at Jeanes Hospital, Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown, PA. Her diaconal ministry project was done at Luther Crest, Allentown.

**Linda S. Zawaski** is a member of Hope, Bowers. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cedar Crest College, Allentown in 1977, and a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Moravian Seminary in 2006. Linda affiliated with the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg for her training. Her diaconal ministry project was done at the Lutheran Home, Topton and at Trinity, Topton.

Also in January, 2007, the Candidacy Committee approved David L. Brown and Ryan D. Stout for ordination, pending receipt and acceptance of a proper call. Michael J. Scholtes was approved for ordination on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, pending the receipt and acceptance of a proper call.

**David L. Brown** is a member of Jordan, Orefield. He received a Bachelor of Sciences degree from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia in 1984, and a Master of Divinity degree from Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield in 2004. He affiliated with the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He completed a quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem, and did his internship at St. Paul, Allentown.

**Michael J. Scholtes** is a member of St. Andrew, Perkasio. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Muhlenberg College, Allentown in 1997, and a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 2001. He completed a quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education at the Penn Foundation, Sellersville, and did internship at Good Shepherd, Kreidersville.

**Ryan D. Stout** is a member of Holy Spirit, Emmaus. He received a Bachelor of Sciences degree from the Pennsylvania State University, State College in 2002, and a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 2006. He completed a quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem and did internship at St. Paul, Arlington, MA.

*Cheryl F. Meinschein, synod staff*

## CAMPUS MINISTRY (ELCA)

Recently, an article in *The Washington Post* indicated that Centenarians are one of the fastest growing groups in the U.S. One hundred years is a major milestone in a person's life . . . or the life of a ministry of the church.

In 2007, the ELCA is celebrating 100 years of Lutheran Campus Ministry. In 1907, Howard Gold was the first pastor called to minister full-time to students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

One hundred years later, the ELCA has an official presence at over 192 state and private colleges and universities, including 26 in Region 7.

ELCA Campus Ministry is a partnership involving a local campus ministry center or congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization. On behalf of the 26 local ministries as well as the ELCA churchwide organization, I thank the synods of Region 7 for their partnership in these ministries.

***Your campus ministries create disciples.*** Students find a community of faith in which to explore and deepen their faith. Students not connected to any church often find a spiritual home.

***Your campus ministries inspire leaders.*** New generations of leaders for the church and the world are raised. ELCA seminaries report that the median age of entering students is below 30 again, and campus ministries have played a large role in that development.

***Your campus ministries make a difference in the world.*** Over 80% of them have organized ongoing local community service projects or mission trips to the Gulf Coast and other places to enable students to live out their faith in action.

***Your campus ministries shape academic institutions and experiences.*** Not only do they reach out to students, but to faculty, staff, and administrators as well.

A hundredth birthday is a special time! Please take time at this assembly to greet the campus pastors or ministers in your midst, and the students some of them have brought along for this occasion, and congratulate them on the good work they are doing . . . that **we** are doing together with them. And let us pray that together as congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, we can help guarantee that Lutherans will have a strong witness on campuses for at least another 100 years.

*Jack A. Saarela, coordinator*

## CAMPUS MINISTRY (NEPS)

Lutheran ministries are present on college and university campuses in our synod, sharing the Gospel through word and deed with the whole campus community. The primary outreach is through Partner Congregations, congregations that minister to and with a college or university in their area. Two other ministries work in our synod: the Chapel at Muhlenberg College, an ELCA-related college, and Campus Ministries of Northeast PA, an ecumenical ministry that works cooperatively with synod congregations in the northern part of the synod.

Synod funding for Campus Ministry comes from congregation benevolence to the synod and ELCA, and is distributed by the Witness and Service team to the Campus Ministry Affinity Group. Congregations and ministries that wish to receive funding should contact the Campus Ministry Affinity Group at [www.nepacampusministry.org](http://www.nepacampusministry.org).

The Campus Ministry Affinity Group meets regularly for mutual support and conversation about the synod vision for campus ministries. The Affinity Group seeks to support existing Partner Congregations, maintains a website for congregations and students, and identifies Lutheran students in synod colleges and universities.

In 2007, Lutheran Campus Ministry celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Lutheran Campus Ministry began in 1907 with the calling of Pastor Howard Gold to the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The Centennial theme is comprised of three phrases, each emphasizing the ongoing mission of Campus Ministry: Expanding Minds, Deepening Faith, and Inspiring Service. Information about the year-long celebration can be found at <http://www.elca.org/campusministry/celebrate100>. (Thanks to the ELCA website for this content.)

If you or your congregation would like to become involved in campus ministry, please contact the group at [www.nepacampusministry.org](http://www.nepacampusministry.org).

*The Campus Ministry Affinity Group*

## GAY AND LESBIAN MINISTRY TASK FORCE

As part of our ongoing mandate from the Synod, the task force is seeking to expand the number of congregations on our territory who wish to follow the Synod's example by declaring themselves to be Reconciling In Christ.

The task force is hosting "Night of Inquiry: Being a Welcoming Congregation" at several locations around our Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The first such event was held at Muhlenberg

College for congregations in the Lehigh Valley. We will be bringing together representatives of several congregations to discuss the Reconciling In Christ program with congregations already declaring themselves RIC. The purpose of the RIC program, its goals, and the methods these congregations used to reach RIC status are discussed in an informal setting. The program includes discussion and dinner, plenty of time for sharing hopes and dreams.

The second of these sessions will be held in Berks County for congregations in that area of the synod. A third event will be scheduled for the northern section of the synod as well. We are especially indebted to the Witness and Service Team for their support of our ministry to our GLBT Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

As always, anyone who shares our aims and goals, and wishes to help in their achievement is most welcome to join our task force. New ideas and visions and new perspectives keep our work fresh and vital. By contacting the synod office you will be put in touch with our task force.

*Bob Hensley, chair*

## GLOBAL MISSION

Global Mission in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod is handled by five sub-committees (one for each of our four Companion Synods and one for Global Mission Resources). Each sub-committee meets regularly and functions in the way that best serves that sub-committee.

Listed below is a report on the activities of the past year and a look toward the future for each of the sub-committees:

### **Saxony, Germany**

The Saxony Committee continues to enjoy a very active relationship with our companion synods in Germany. In October of last year, an intergenerational group of 16 (12 adults, 4 youth) visited Pennsylvania. During their stay we had the opportunity to visit New York City, local ministries, and historical sites relative to our heritage. Culturally they experienced Halloween, celebrated Reformation in local congregations and participated in the 250th anniversary celebration of Friedens Lutheran in New Ringgold. A day long retreat was held at Bear Creek Camp and their trip concluded in Washington, D.C.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are planning to host a group of young adults from the Borna District in October 2007. Our synod has been invited to travel once again to Saxony in

April of 2008. This will be an intergenerational group. Then in June 2008, a group of young adults will be traveling to the region as has previously been done. We look forward to these opportunities to learn more about our religious and cultural heritage as well as to experience better relations with our Christian brothers and sisters in Saxony.

*Michele and Wayne Kaufman, co-chairs*

### **Slovenia**

The Slovenia Companion Church Committee was extremely busy during the past year. For the first time in our synod's history, a Companion Church committee initiated a "student exchange" rather than a "group visit." In mid-July of 2006, ten teenagers from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Slovenia arrived at Liberty International Airport in Newark, NJ, for a three week stay with host families throughout our synod. During this period, the students shared fully in the lives of their host families, learning first hand about American culture and also improving their English language skills. In addition to these everyday activities, the committee also planned additional group events. These events included visits to New York City and to *Musikfest* in Bethlehem, PA. It also included a picnic co-hosted by the Bethlehem/Murska Sobota Sister City Association and the committee.

In response to the visit of the Slovenian delegation, eight teenagers and two adult chaperones from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod will travel to Slovenia on July 1, 2007, and spend three weeks living with host families on the territory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Slovenia. The students are: Tiffany Amato, Nathaniel Campia, Lindsay Gorski, Stephen Ingham, Christie Kaufman, Christopher Lintner, Eric Stover and Josh Wilson. With the exception of Eric Stover, all of these students are from families that hosted Slovenian students last summer. The adult chaperones are Mr. Kevin Remaly from St. John's Windish, Bethlehem and Ms. Barbara Taylor from St. Peter's, Bethlehem. Barbara is, of course, the Secretary of our Synod and will also represent Bishop Strobel in any meetings with Slovenian Lutheran clergy during the student exchange.

Since we hope to continue this program with another visit of Slovenian students in 2008, followed by a return visit of American students to Slovenia in 2009, we would be very interested in hearing from you if you would like to host a student in your home next year and/or have your teenage son or daughter travel to Slovenia in two years.

*Gary Langensiepen, chair*

## South Central Diocese, ELC Tanzania

The South Central Diocese Companion Synod Team concentrated on building the network of Companion Congregations in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and planning for visitations to the South Central Diocese in 2007.

At year end we have a total of 15 congregations in relationship with a Tanzania congregation. The depth of these relationships varies greatly ranging from those who have already visited their companions in Tanzania to those whose relationship is only several months old. As a result of initiatives being planned we are hopeful of establishing an additional 5 companion relationships in 2007.

There are three trips being actively planned for 2007. This will be the first year since the beginning of our relationship that we will have multiple trips in the same calendar year. Two congregations are planning visits and a Youth Servant trip is well on its way to a June 2007 departure.

The Youth Servant group has been selected and is composed of 8 youth, 2 adult coordinators and one assistant coordinator. The group is now engaged in team building, getting their inoculations, studying about Tanzania, and processing documents for passports and visas.

*[After this report was prepared, the trip to Tanzania was cancelled for 2007.]*

*Charles Mohn, 2006 chair*

*Russell Haab, 2007 chair*

## Argentina/Uruguay

2006 was a year in which the committee has seen new faces joining it. We have been able to meet regularly and discern the direction to take between our committee and our companion synod in Argentina and Uruguay. The group has been able to keep communication with the offices of the IELU, and it has been able to organize yet another youth servant event to Argentina. This trip will take place between December 26, 2007, and January 4, 2008; this upcoming trip will also include two young adults from the previous trip who will act as youth advisors for the 10 youth who will be selected for the trip.

I am pleased to see the involvement of youth in this type of program; it is my belief that such interaction with a different culture will only broaden the general knowledge and the perspective of our youth, and will give them a chance to work with our brothers and sisters in the southern hemisphere.

*Herbert C. Dolich, chair*

## Global Mission Resource

*Global Mission Resource is currently looking for a chair person.*

Together as companion synods, companion congregations, and partners in Global Mission we will continue to meet the changes, challenges, and mission and ministry opportunities that God blesses us with on our faith journey.

*Kurt E. Garbe, staff liaison*

## LUTHERAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Lutheran Youth Fellowship is an organization that strives to bring youth together in fellowship to God's work within our synod and our world. To help plan events for LYF members and conduct LYF business, our board consists of representatives for all mission districts, as well as an executive, all of which are elected by youth at our annual LYF assembly. In the past year, the board has facilitated many new and old goals and activities, all of which are submitted by youth through resolutions at our assembly.

We have continued to support World Hunger Appeal through the "Burger of the Month" in which \$3 (the cost of a burger) per person is donated each meeting, and the proceeds are sent to help world hunger. Along with that, a new resolution was passed at this year's assembly asking that the board use fair-trade certified products at LYF functions whenever possible, and also that the board ask to allow the sale of fair-trade products at Synod Assembly.

The LYF Assembly also passed a resolution asking to have the Lutheran Youth Fellowship recognized as a "ONE" organization, which the board will be working toward in the coming year.

Besides being concerned with the welfare of our world, the LYF is also concerned with youth involvement in our synod, which was a pressing matter, also, at this year's assembly. A resolution was passed asking the synod to include youth representatives to each of their committees, in addition to their youth male and female representatives.

In the past year, the Lutheran Youth Fellowship has not only acted to change our world and community, but also to keep in mind the importance of Christ in every action the board and LYF members take. Between prayer, worship, and action I think that it is fair to say that this has been a

successful and exciting year for the LYF and its board, and that many opportunities to serve the Lord await our organization in the future.

*Becky Montes de Oca, LYF president*

### SYNOD OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

The Synod Outreach Working Group works to enhance the mission of our synod and its congregations. We are the link between the synod and the current Evangelical Outreach for Congregational Mission (EOCM) of the ELCA. The Working Group serves to connect congregations with EOCM in order to receive mission support. Congregations of our synod are encouraged to submit applications for outreach support. These applications are submitted to EOCM upon approval by the Outreach Working Group.

Mission support from EOCM makes possible the Latino Ministries of San Martin de Porres, Allentown, and the West Berks Mission Center, Reading. Also Trinity Deaf, Reading is a beneficiary of this support. This past year, New Life, New Tripoli was approved for mission support in order to hire additional staff to better meet the needs of a steadily growing congregation.

At meetings of the Synod Outreach Working Group we discuss the various trends and needs of the mission districts, congregations, and communities that comprise our synod. We see a need for our congregations to be more engaged in developing and participating in mission and outreach in our neighborhoods. We also have been discussing and promoting learning events about Natural Church Development (NCD) resources. NCD is a process by which congregations can evaluate their ministries by learning how well they rank compared with eight quality characteristics. Extensive research by the developers of NCD shows that the presence of these quality characteristics "release and develop" the potential that God has laid into the church. If the eight areas of quality exist in a congregation, most likely it is a growing congregation. In June and October of this past year, our synod, in cooperation with the Upstate New York Synod, offered a training event in NCD and to teach participants to "coach" congregations through the process of NCD. These learning events were made possible by grants from EOCM.

*Douglas S. McKeeby, chair*

### WORLD HUNGER APPEAL TEAM

It's appropriate to begin this report with some words from Brother Martin. In 1517 Luther preached a series of sermons on the Ten Com-

mandments which then formed the basis of his Large Catechism in 1528. The following year Luther wrote a sort of "Reader's Digest Version" which we know as the Small Catechism, in which his familiar comment on the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment reads as follows:

*"We are to fear and love God so that we do not hurt our neighbor in any way, but help him in all his physical needs."*

Much less familiar are the words of Luther's commentary on "Thou shalt not kill" written in the Large Catechism:

*"...this commandment is violated not only when a person actually does evil, but also when he fails to do good to his neighbor, or though he has opportunity, fails to prevent, protect, and save him from suffering bodily harm or injury. ... If you see anyone suffer hunger and do not feed him, you have let him starve..."*

Brother Martin knows how to put it to us! These are pointed words which apply to our Christian obligation to feed the hungry.

The Synod's Hunger Appeal Team tries to keep this Christian obligation in front of our pastors, leaders and people with regular communications by mail and via the synod's website. The latter has replaced the familiar YES I WILL SHARE A LOAF yellow pages which had been included in the synod's monthly mailing to church leaders up until Oct. 2006. These now can be accessed at [www.godslove.org/publications/news.htm](http://www.godslove.org/publications/news.htm). The advantage is that the messages can be downloaded for use in congregational publications.

The disadvantage is that many people will no longer see them unless they are disciplined to access the website regularly.

In 2005 giving to the Hunger Appeal dropped greatly from the previous five years because of significant giving to the Disaster Appeal as a result of the Tsunami and Katrina. This year (2006) giving has increased, but not quite to the highs of 2004 and earlier.

2006	\$424,980	2002	\$499,753
2005	\$375,743	2001	\$448,352
2004	\$455,115	2000	\$438,977
2003	\$484,744		

The synod team consists of at least one person from each Mission district. If you would like one of these people to consult with your leaders or speak to your congregation please call the synod office.

Please be diligent in keeping the needs of this "Silent Disaster" before your people. It's one of the most important things we do.

Our new red hymnal (EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP) provides an alternative to the familiar dismissal: "Go in peace. Serve the Lord." It is more pointed: "Go in peace. Remember the poor."

*Helmut Kaffine, chair*

### **YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM**

The Youth Ministry Coordinating Team supports events that provide an opportunity for youth, advisors and parents to learn about and grow in their faith. "The Cost of Discipleship" was the theme around which the 2006-2007 events focused.

The team is presently in the process of re-examining its mission. We've had several meetings centered on developing a vision statement, goals and strategies. We hope to have these in place by the fall of 2007.

The attendance for the Junior High event has been declining. In 2005 the event was cancelled. Instead of sponsoring a Junior High event this year, the team decided to look at ways of partnering with Bear Creek camp in promoting and sponsoring events for junior high youth.

SYMDANO (Synod Youth Ministry Day and Networking Opportunity) was held April 14, 2007 at Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing. The theme for the day was "*What's in YOUR Treasure Chest?*" which focused on the treasures of time and talent and finances. Typically held in February, the event was moved to April to avoid any weather problems that can show up in the winter months!

Dorney Park tickets will be available at discount prices for the 2007 summer season. Profits are deposited into the synod youth scholarship fund.

If you are interested in assisting with youth ministry events, please contact Karen Mathias-Long at the synod office.

*Jean Sandberg, chair*