

PARTNERS IN
the spirit
MARCH 2004



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Bishop Manyiewa
To Attend Assembly

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LYF Assembly Goers DO LYF

Celebrate Lutheran Schools Week March
7-14

EYTV: Training Youth in Today's
Technology

Partner Synod Youth Participates in LYF
Assembly

SWIM, Open Space, Welcoming
Resolution, Elections Highlight LYF
Assembly



The Rev. Shadrack Manyiewa, bishop of the South Central Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, will be our guest at the 17th Annual Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Bishop Manyiewa's wife, known affectionately as "Mama" among the people of the diocese, will accompany the bishop.

The assembly will be held June 4-5, 2004, at the Sovereign Performing Arts Center in downtown Reading.

The visit by Bishop Manyiewa follows visits by Bishop Strobel and nine others from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in September 2003 and by Pastors Kurt Garbe and Carl Filer in the summer of 2002.

A highlight of the assembly will be a special Tanzania Festival on Friday evening. Festival activities will take place at the Sovereign Performing Arts Center, Trinity and St. John Lutheran Churches, and the surrounding area.

The group planning the festival is chaired by synod vice president Priscilla Schlenker Kinney, who was one of those accompanying Bishop Strobel last fall. The planning group also includes persons who visited Tanzania on the synod's behalf, along with others from the synod.

People from the groups that visited our companion synod will be on hand to tell about the visit and to share pictures and items from the trip.

Focus on Tanzania

In addition to the festival and greetings from Bishop Manyiewa, the assembly will include presentations on life in the South Central Diocese and some of the issues facing the people there.

The South Central Diocese is the poorest diocese in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. One grave issue facing the church there is the HIV/AIDS crisis, which has resulted in a huge number of orphans—well over 10,000 in the diocese. It is not at all unusual to see young children caring for



younger siblings.

The topography of the diocese is rugged and mountainous. There are few paved roads anywhere in the area. Some pastors travel their parishes on motorbikes—if they have them. More motorbikes are needed.

There will be opportunities during the assembly to contribute to the needs in our companion synod.

For more information on the assembly, see the related article in the [February](#) issue of *Partners in the Spirit*. Registration forms, housing information, and other assembly materials and information are available via the [Around the Synod](#) link on this Web site.





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"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night ..."

These words may apply not only to our US postal workers but also to the many parents and adult advisors who braved the snowstorm that hit Northeastern Pa. and transported youth and adults to the 16th annual LYF assembly at Pocmont Resort in Bushkill December 5-7, 2003.

With only 20 cancellations, the assembly began on time and continued throughout the weekend with an adjusted schedule.

The snowstorm played havoc with the workshop schedule on Saturday because many of the workshop leaders were not able to travel. Those workshop leaders who were a part of the assembly picked up the cancellations and expanded their workshops while other adult leaders who were present led impromptu gatherings.

A real treat for Friday evening was a concert by SWIM, a new musical group made up of youth from our synod congregations. Chris Wolf, Bobby Siegfried, Kurt Mitchell, Scott Siegfried (all members of Emanuel, Bath) and JT Moyer from St. John's, Fogelsville, entertained the assembly with mostly original music. SWIM was snowed in with the assembly for the weekend and so was able to provide extra backup for the LYF assembly music group.

A special guest to the assembly, Josh Toufar, felt at home with the snow. Josh is the president of the Lutheran Youth Organization of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, our partner synod. Josh had met our delegation at the ELCA churchwide assembly in Milwaukee in August 2003 and was invited to be with us for the weekend. Youth and adults enjoyed conversation with Josh and Josh enjoyed participating in our assembly. (Read Josh's report to his synod in this newsletter.)

One of the business items on the agenda in addition to the election of officers for 2004-2005 and 2004 board members (see *SWIM, Open Space, Welcoming Resolution, Elections Highlight LYF Assembly*) was a resolution to declare the Lutheran Youth Fellowship of the Northeastern PA Synod a

welcoming organization. Time was given for much discussion, both in small groups and in the assembly. The 2003 LYF Board brought the resolution to the assembly. An amended resolution was passed on Sunday, Dec. 7. You can read the resolution in the LYF article entitled *SWIM, Open Space, Welcoming Resolution, Elections Highlight LYF Assembly*.

The LYF assembly meets annually, usually the first full weekend in December, for fellowship, learning, worship, and some necessary business items. It is open to all youth in grades 9-12 and their adult advisors.

Dates are set for the next LYF Assembly, December 3-5, 2004. The assembly will be held at Pocmont.



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March 7-14

*Let the
children
come*



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"In recognition of Lutheran Schools Week and on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I acknowledge with deep gratitude the many gifts of Lutheran schools to this church, the communities they serve, the congregations that support them, and the children who come to learn." (The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.)

The theme of this year's Lutheran Schools Week is "Let the Children Come." Jesus expresses a special love for children. He encouraged parents to bring their children and youth to sit with him. He talked to them in their own language, knelt down to their level, looked into their eyes and saw something very special. He saw their honest, trusting childlike faith. He responded with the words from Mark 10:14, "It is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs." The faith of our children and youth is an example for all of us to follow. We watch and participate as they reach out to the world to share their faith. This is our celebration!

Some 200 elementary and secondary schools and 1800 early childhood education centers are operated by congregations of the ELCA. About 20,000 teachers work with 250,000 students who attend ELCA-affiliated schools and early childhood education centers. Here in Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, there are 77 daycare centers and elementary schools.

Lutheran schools and centers provide environments whose mission it is to provide children and families with a safe, caring and nurturing community where they can grow, learn and look to the future. ELCA schools and centers are places where children and youth are encouraged to come and be a part of the global community that is their world.

Learn more about Lutheran schools (www.elca.org/dhes/schools/), Lutheran Schools Week (www.elca.org/dhes/schools/schoolsweek/), and the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (www.eleanational.org/). And plan to participate in Lutheran Schools Week, whether or not your congregation has a school or early childhood center.



Here's one way your congregation might participate: During Lutheran Schools Week, every ELCA congregation, whether they sponsor a weekday education program or not, is invited to take part in *Kisses for Kids*. Purchase or ask for donations of bags of Hershey's *Kisses*. Ask congregational members, school/center parents, and friends to buy one *Kiss* for every kid they love, and donate \$2.00 for each *Kiss*.

Each congregation keeps one-half of the money raised to benefit its school or center, or for those without a weekday program, their vacation Bible school, Sunday school or other children's educational programs, or support a sister congregation who does house a weekday program. The other half is sent to the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA), 2625 Colby Avenue, Suite 3, #202, Everett, WA 98201, by April 1, 2004, to assist them in their mission of promoting and supporting quality, Christ-centered education in the schools and centers of the ELCA. Visit www.eleanational.org or call 800-500-7644 for more information.

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"The heart and soul of what we're trying to teach here is telling stories. It's not simply the medium but the message that's important."

So says the Rev. Dave Ellingson, an ELCA pastor and founder of Evergreen Youth Television. EYTV began more than 13 years ago to train youth to produce videos from a faith and values perspective.

EYTV's summer video camp offers youth an opportunity to learn, grow and gain hands-on experience with an exciting technology. Participants gain valuable knowledge working with professionals producing videos from a faith and values perspective. The camp teaches youth to use their faith and values for the formation of tangible creations in the "real world."

Video is a medium that a lot of youth are excited about. Students at EYTV's summer video camp create real videos for real clients. They get experience in everything from client interaction and budgeting to shooting and lighting.

Evergreen graduates often continue their education in communications and go on to work in the communications field. 1992 graduate Michael-Ryan Fletchal is president and founder of MiRydea Entertainment, Inc., located in Los Angeles. Another 1992 graduate, Ben Johnson, is a freelance broadcast engineer.

The 2004 video camp will take place July 21-August 1, 2004, at Trinity Lutheran College in Issaquah, Washington. Youth entering grades 10-12 in fall 2004 are eligible to apply for the camp.

Applications are available at www.eytv.org or by calling 800.878.7280. The application deadline is May 31. Students are responsible for camp registration fees and transportation to and from Seattle, Washington.

EYTV is an independent nonprofit Lutheran organization.



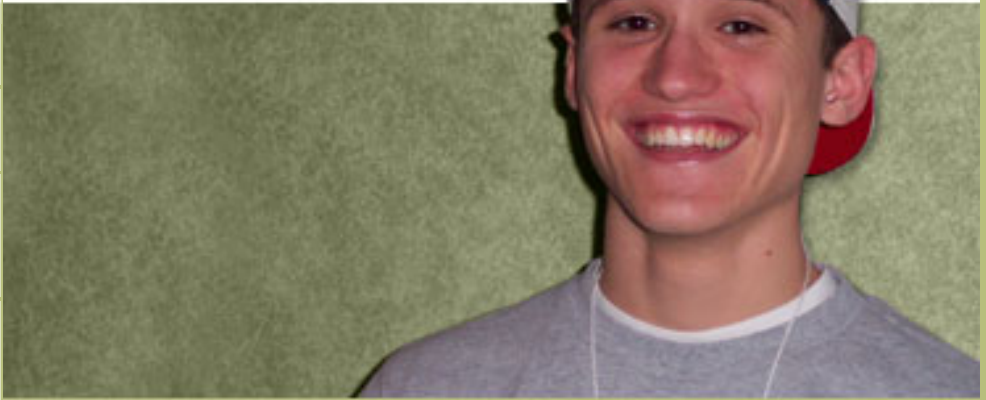


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[Ed. note: This letter appeared in the January-February 2004 *Northwest Network*, the newsletter of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, our ELCA Partner Synod.]

Friends of the NW Synod of WI,

My name is Josh Toufar. It has been my privilege to serve you. I am the past president of our Synod's LYO board and a current member of the synod council. Last summer I was a voting member at the churchwide assembly. It was there in Milwaukee that I was invited to attend a youth event this fall in our partner synod, NE Pennsylvania. They invited me to come to their youth assembly at Pocmont Resort in Bushkill, Pa., located in the Pocono Mountains. It was beautiful. Thanks to Mother Nature, I was almost given the gift of an extended stay. This gathering took place the same weekend that the East Coast was pummeled with snow. However, I was able to return home – and on time!

The thing that most people have asked me since I returned is, "What was the main difference between our gathering and theirs?" They don't have just one gathering each year, they have a series of gatherings. The gathering that I was at would be more like our Synod Youth Convo. It was, for the most part, a business meeting. Our business meeting took only a couple of hours at Godstock this year. Theirs lasted most of the weekend.

There was really only one item of business that had to be covered beyond the election of officers. After a weekend-long debate and many amendments the resolution stating that the LYF (Lutheran Youth Fellowship) of NE Penn "will be an organization 'Reconciled in Christ.'" It basically means that they wish to be open to all and not exclude anyone for any reason. Some of the debate centered on issues of the current ELCA sexuality study. It was interesting to hear both sides of the debate on this subject. Kids were able to air their opinions on some of most difficult issues the church faces with adults sitting in the back of the room.

Please keep the youth of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, their

president Matt Swarez, as well as Bishop Strobel and his staff in your prayers.



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Pictured: 2004-2005 LYF officers

"Awesome" was by far the most-used word to describe the concert given Friday night by SWIM, a new musical group made up of youth from our synod congregations. Delegates, visitors, and advisors who attended the concert gave it rave reviews. A typical response: "They were very, very good. They really have a great gift from God, every one of them."

Open Space was a popular offering again this year. Introduced at the LYF assembly two years ago, the Open Space process gives youth the opportunity to name topics/issues that are important to them and to facilitate a discussion on the topic. "The open space on morals and ethics was amazing!" wrote one participant on the evaluation. "The topics talked about were always changing, keeping the discussion very active."

"I felt that the people in my group (abortion) talked more freely without adults there," wrote another. "We had a great conversation going."

A third person wrote, "One of the best things all weekend. It is good to have time to talk about whatever you want with new people and without adults."

Major plenary and small group time was spent discussing a resolution from the LYF board concerning LYF's status as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) organization. Following discussion, this amended resolution passed on Sunday morning:

Whereas, all individuals regardless of any circumstances including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and background shall be welcomed openly into the Lutheran Youth Fellowship, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Lutheran Youth Fellowship makes no distinction for or against the actions/practices of the previously stated persons, be it further

Resolved, that the assembly direct the Secretary of the Lutheran Youth Fellowship of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to forward a copy of this resolution to Lutherans Concerned/North America requesting recognition as



a Reconciling in Christ organization.

Election results for LYF officers and board (terms) are as follows:

Officers (serving June 2004-May 2005): Emily Bender (New Jerusalem, Hellertown), president; Noelle Augustine (Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven), vice president; Laura Printz (Hope, Reading), secretary; Daniel Eisenberg (St. John, Jim Thorpe), treasurer.

Board (serving December 2003-December 2004):

Bethlehem-Easton Mission District:

Hillary Bender (New Jerusalem, Hellertown);
alternate, Jill Hutchens (St. John, Easton)

East Berks Mission District:

Josh Schaeffer (Friedens, Oley);
alternate to be named

Hazleton-Lehigh Mission District:

Ashley Ackerman (Christ, Conyngham);
alternate, Jenifer Moore (Christ, Christmans)

Lehigh Mission District:

John T. Moyer (St. John, Fogelsville);
alternate to be named

Northern Lehigh Valley Mission District:

Rachel Tretiak (Hope, Cherryville);
alternate, Jamie Bishop (Emmanuel, Bath)

Pocono Mission District:

Kenny Maillet (Holy Trinity, Dingmans Ferry);
alternate, Rebecca Montes de Oca (St. Paul, Tannersville)

Schuylkill Mission District:

Jairia Tobash (Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven);
alternate, K C Smith (St. Paul, Tower City)

Scranton-Wilkes Barre Mission District:

representative to be named;
alternate, Wayne Kaufman (St. Paul, Mountain Top)

West Berks Mission District:

Meghan Fatzinger (Incarnation, Reading);
alternate, Danielle Conrad (Hope, Reading)

PHOTO:

Noelle Augustine
vice-president elect - Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven

Laura Printz

secretary elect - Hope, Reading

Emily Bener

president-elect - New Jerusalem, Hellertown

Daniel Eisenberg
treasurer-elect - St. John, Jim Thorpe Heights

