

◆ SYNOD NEWS ◆

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

July 2008

Highlights of the 2008 Synod Assembly



Nearly 900 people gathered at Split Rock Resort for the 21st annual assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod May 29-31, 2008.

On the final ballot Saturday morning, Pastor **Samuel R. Zeiser** was elected to be the third bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod since the ELCA was formed in 1988.

Pastor Zeiser received 366 votes on the final ballot. Pastor Mary Gade (Ziegels, Breinigsville) received 289 votes.

Meet the Bishop-Elect

The Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Zeiser will take office as the new bishop of the



He and Linda are the parents of a daughter, Samantha, who completed a

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on August 1, 2008.

Currently serving as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Allentown, Pastor Zeiser formerly served as pastor of St. John, Nanticoke, Prince of Peace, Johnsonville, and Bethany, West Reading.

Pastor Zeiser's wife, Linda, a homemaker, is a native of Allentown. She enjoys providing volunteer caregiving at nursing facilities, new adventures in cooking, and using her gifts in a variety of ways in the congregational setting.

master's degree in elementary education at the University of Georgia and now teaches first grade in Athens, Georgia.

Pastor Zeiser received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Albright College, Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and a Ph.D. from Drew University.

Writing about the gifts he brings to the office of bishop, Pastor Zeiser lists these: "a deep faith that Christ is risen and is present among us; a passion for the mission of Christ's church in our time; a commitment to discern

A Note from Bishop-Elect Samuel R. Zeiser

To my brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod:

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I write to you still somewhat stunned and in disbelief. The realities of the transition, however, are taking effect and there is little time for sitting and gazing into space.

So many of you have sent notes or have called with congratulatory messages of support and promises of prayer. Be assured that I am deeply grateful for the kindnesses extended to my family and me.

It is important for you to know that our synod is being remembered in prayer across the ELCA. I ask you to join me in thanksgiving to God for the extraordinary bond of faith we share with nearly 5 million people in this church.

The days ahead hold the promise of new life in Christ, and I look forward to sharing the days and the promise with you in the mission of the gospel.

Your servant in the Lord,
Samuel



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and articulate a vision for that mission; a readiness to motivate support that will help carry out that mission; patience in the face of challenge; focus in matters of organization and goal setting, and a conviction that the Spirit will accomplish God's intention in all that is begun in Jesus' name."

Pastor Zeiser will be installed as bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on September 27 at Elm Park United Methodist Church in Scranton. Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson will be the installing bishop.

Prayer Shawls Support Assembly-Goers

As a reminder that the election of a bishop is grounded in and guided by prayer, each person who attended the assembly received a simple (and colorful) prayer shawl.



Pastor Eileen Le Van, Nativity, Reading, directed the project to make these prayer shawls.

Her goal was to get churches to contribute 850 shawls, the estimated number of persons expected to attend. Instead, she collected more than 1,600 from at least 45 congregations from all over the synod.

Many congregations took shawls home to use for social ministry projects.

Check out upcoming issues of *Partners in the Spirit* for stories about congregations and people who provided the shawls.

The Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich Brings Greetings from the ELCA

Pastor Kathie Bender Schwich, Executive for Synodical and Constituent Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and an assistant to Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, guided voting members through the bishop election process.



Her report to the assembly about the ELCA focused in part on the ELCA initiative, Book of Faith. This initiative invites the whole church to become more fluent in the language of Scripture.

Pastor Bender Schwich was the preacher at the closing Eucharist on Saturday. You can read her sermon at www.godslove.org.

Resolutions and Elections

Resolutions adopted at the assembly included a call to congregations and individuals to engage in Bible study through the "Book of Faith" initiative; urged members to tithe their government-funded Economic Stimulus check; memorialized the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm this church's commitment to peace-making in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict; encouraged pastors and lay rostered leaders and congregations to provide pastoral care to same-gender couples; called on appropriate churchwide units to explore the possibility of granting voice and vote at synod assemblies to

Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers.

The full text of all the assembly resolutions may be found on the synod website.

Elected at the Assembly

Synod Council: Pr. Barbara Davis, Leslie Joy Wagner, Pr. Paul Braden, Christie Kaufman, Catherine Mordosky, Pr. Roxanne Kringle, David Derr

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia: AiM Karen Matthias-Long

Committee on Discipline: Pr. Dennis Moore, Pr. Susan Ruggles, Suzanne (Tucker) Irwin, Lloyd Wertz, Pr. Grace Olson, Pr. John Houck, Gwen Krapf, Sherry Lockhart

Voting members to the 2009

Churchwide Assembly: Clergy: Mary Gade, Fred Opalinski, Roxanne Kringle, Bruce MacLaughlin, Carl Shankweiler, Susan Ruggles, Barbara Davis, Harold Hand, Diane LaFauci, Randeale Albers

Lay Male: Edward Cool, Kenneth Miller, Walter Hampton II, John Ziegler, Glenn Miller, Ron Mordosky, Robert Hensley, Guy Ehler, Charles Rush

Lay Female: Priscilla Kinney, AiM Karen Matthias-Long, Heidi Buzzard, AiM Linda Maule, Nancy Terry, Frances Ferrari, Ying-Chu Kramer, AiM Barbara Taylor, Eileen Koehler, Kathy Smith, Joanne Rush

Mark your calendar!

**Installation of
Bishop Samuel R. Zeiser
September 27, 2008
Elm Park United Methodist
Church, Scranton**

**2009 Synod Assembly
June 5-6, 2009
Site to be announced**