

Star

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Song of Life

The darkness is desperately deep.
 Wars empty the world of hope.
 Tragedies steal our joy.
 Fear chokes relationships.
 Anxiety cripples meaning.

Nights are haunted by ghosts of the past,
 seeking healing today,
 while longing for some day.

There is only darkness.
 Desperate.
 Deep.

Until Mary sings.
 Even before He was born
 He filled his mother with song
 and the world with hope.

Luke 1: 46-55

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
 and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him
 from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
 he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of
 their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their
 thrones,
 and lifted up the lowly;

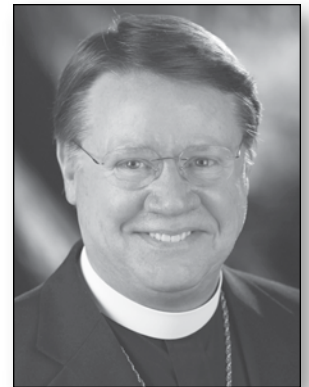
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
 and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
 in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our
 ancestors,
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*

The song of new life
 brings light to the darkness,
 fills the world with hope,
 celebrates joy,
 deepens faith,
 creates meaning.

We join the angel’s refrain,
 “Gloria!”



* New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

– Steven L. Ullestad
 Bishop, Northeastern Iowa Synod



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Song of Life
- 2 ELCA Presents “Good Gifts” for the Christmas Season
- 3 Planning for 2008 Synod Assembly and Annual Meetings
- 4 Barnabas Uplift
- 5-8 Forums, Education, Events, Congregations, Calendar

ELCA offers “Good Gifts” for the Christmas Season

By: Karris Golden

You selected a pretty sweater for your sister. You stood in line to get that new video game he just had to have. After going to three stores, you found the DVD your wife just had to see.

Christmas gift shopping is rewarding when you see the smiles on the recipients’ faces. However, once you’ve cleaned up the wrapping paper and stowed the Christmas decorations, do the gifts you gave truly keep giving?

The “ELCA Good Gifts Catalog” offers a way to give presents that offer relief, development, education and advocacy through myriad ministries.

Wiederaenders first used the catalog three years ago and appreciates how the ELCA keeps costs down so more of the gift reaches recipients.

“None of my children or grandchildren live close, so I don’t really always know what they would like,” she explained. “They all know we do this type of thing, and I think they understand why.”

Giving a “Good Gift” starts with exploring the catalog. It is broken down by types of gifts and dollar amounts.

Once you’ve indicated the donation you want to make, you can indicate that it is a gift. The catalog and web site both offer tribute cards you can



For example, your sister may be hard to buy gifts for and interested in hunger justice issues. The Good Gifts Catalog section on ending hunger offers options including “ELCA World Hunger Appeal” and “Stand with Africa.”

If you select a gift in the World Hunger Appeal section, you can give in designated amounts from \$20

to \$1,000. Or you can give whatever amount you choose. A \$20 gift would build and stock a fish farm in a developing nation. For \$45, you can buy a goat for a family in your sister’s name, while \$1,000 provides for digging a well.

Among the other giving areas are Domestic Disaster Response, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Grace Matters radio program and Lutheran Men in Mission.

personalize to notify the gift recipient of the gift you’ve made in her or his name.

When giving a “Good Gift,” Wiederaenders sends a personalized message to explain the thought she put into the present. “Since I am a promoter of the environment, I give my grandchildren and great-grandchildren animals, trees, bees, etc. If there isn’t a ‘story’ available, I make one up, tailoring it to the age of the child.

“For example, if I give a flock of ducks to my 3-year-old grandchild, I write in the card, ‘You would love to chase the ducks, but you live in the city and your Mom probably wouldn’t cook a duck egg for you. So I found a family in China.’”

If Wiederaenders selects bees for an older child, she’ll send along a check in the card and suggest that the money be used to go out to

The catalog includes a variety of ELCA and partner ministries offered both domestically and globally, showing users gift amounts that symbolically represent the church’s work. Many of the ministries featured in the catalog are additionally supported by ELCA church offering gifts.

For some who have difficulty selecting gifts for others, the Good Gifts Catalog is a viable option, says Nita Wiederaenders of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Dubuque.

>> Continued on page 6

Planning for 2008 Synod Assembly and Annual Meetings

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The 2008 Synod Assembly will be held at Wartburg College, Waverly, June 13-14. The theme will be *Living in God's Amazing Grace: Faithful and Bold*. The synod's emphasis will be *Word of Life*.

As we prepare to gather in Assembly around word and sacrament, it's important to be aware of the process that brings business items to the Assembly. All business brought for action to voting members of the Assembly is presented in resolution form. Resolutions submitted to the Resolutions Committee may come from a voting member of a congregation in the Northeastern Iowa Synod, a congregation, or a conference. A Resolution Submission Form is enclosed.

ELECTION OF SYNOD BISHOP

The synod business will include election of a bishop. To prepare for the election, please review the resource entitled *Choosing a Bishop, Questions to Assist in Preparation* enclosed in this issue of the *STAR*.

The procedure used for election of the bishop in the Northeastern Iowa Synod is provided in section S9.04. of the synod constitution:

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who

receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

ELECT SYNOD ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBERS

Remember to elect synod assembly voting members at your annual meeting. Constitution *C5.04. states:

This congregation shall choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The synod council approved the following lay congregational representation for the 2008 synod assembly:

- The total lay delegation from any congregation be as nearly as possible 50% male and 50% female.
- two voting members elected by each congregation
- plus one youth voting member elected by each congregation (must be eligible to vote in their congregation)
- plus an additional voting member for every 750 baptized members, i.e., 750=1 additional, 1500=2 additional, 2250=3, etc.

You can make a difference as you elect your congregation's Assembly voting members. And, at your Conference Assembly individuals are nominated for 2009 churchwide voting members,

synod boards, and committees. As you do so, please pray for the planning and preparation of the Synod Assembly.



– Linda J. Hudgins
Assistant to the Bishop

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

A number of amendments were made to the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. A copy of the amendments is enclosed in this issue of the *STAR*.

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

To assist your budget planning for 2008, the 2008 Compensation Guidelines adopted by the 2007 Synod Assembly are available on the synod website at www.neiasynod.org/synod_news/pdf/compgui08.pdf.

TREASURERS MEETING

Congregation treasurers will be gathering together to learn and share on Saturday, January 12, 2008, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Waverly. Guest speakers will be Keith Oltrogge, CPA, Denver and Mike Byl, First Insurance Services LC, Waverly.

Pastors, financial committee members, and others are welcome to attend. To register, contact Linda Hudgins, 319-352-1414.

Barnabas Uplift



BARNABAS UPLIFT CNA SPONSORSHIP

Since July, nine intake applications have been taken for the Barnabas Uplift Certified Nurse's Assistant program. Of these nine, four individuals were accepted into the Barnabas Uplift Certified Nursing Assistant program. Sponsorships were provided by members of Saint Peter Lutheran Church in Denver, IA. As of October 19, 2007, three had successfully completed the coursework and clinical training, and were awaiting the results of their state

board exam. The fourth is expected to complete the training in November.

IOWANS SAVE!

Iowans Save! is a program which allows people to open savings accounts and deposit up to \$2000.00 a year. When the money is withdrawn to be spent on the purchase of a first home in Iowa or college tuition, the participant receives 200% of what they deposited. We have recently received from the government a 12-month extension to continue these Individual Development Accounts. Currently, 18 individuals are saving for homeownership, and seven have purchased homes since June 2007.

MICRO ENTERPRISE

A kick-off event was held on September 6 which attracted over 25 small businesses with over 1/3 located within Waterloo's Consolidated Urban Revitalization Area. More than 100 people attended this event hosted by the Waterloo Neighborhood Development Corporation. Eleven individuals attended a micro enterprise class which ran September 25 through November 15. With assistance from the Waterloo ISED Ventures' office, Wartburg Business faculty person, Susan Meyeraan, surveyed five existing small businesses to assess needs for services, including accounting, marketing, financial resources, etc.

Fund For Leaders In Mission

Of the 148 congregational pastoral calls in this synod, we have 4 pastors who are 30 years of age or younger. The Northeastern Iowa Synod Fall Conference for rostered persons took an offering at one of the five worship services held at the event. \$965 was given to the Northeastern Iowa Synod Fund for Leaders in Mission. This fund now totals \$35,000, and we are anxious to reach our goal for distribution of scholarships to seminary students.

Offering materials are available at the synod office, and members of the Leadership Endowment task force are available to help you plan a special offering to create future pastors for the ELCA in Northeastern Iowa. Please consider your schedule of offerings for 2008, and put this vital concern for our future ministry into your plans.

Gifts may be sent to the synod office designated for the Leadership Endowment. Special thanks go to the Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization, who has contributed to this fund at three of their synod conventions.

Calling all ELCA Parish Nurses!

We are updating our ELCA parish nurse database and need your help. If you are an ELCA parish nurse or have one in your congregation, please email Rebecca Westfield at rwestfield@elcabop.org.

Please send: name, email, contact phone, congregation, and address. Thank You!!

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

Bishop Rev. Dr. Steven L. Ullestad <ullestads@neiasynod.org>

Assistants to the Bishop

Rev. Mark A. Anderson <andersonm@neiasynod.org>

Rev. Darrel W. Gerriets <gerrietsd@neiasynod.org>

Linda J. Hudgins <hudginsl@neiasynod.org>

Rev. Nancy J. Larson <nancy.larson@ecunet.org>

STAR Editors

Linda J. Hudgins, Julie Drewes <jdrewes@mchsi.com>

The STAR is published 11 times a year by the Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th Street SW, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804; <www.neiasynod.org>, phone 319-352-1414, FAX 319-352-1416.

Send news for the January 2008 issue to Linda Hudgins by December 2.

Tri-State Forum

JANUARY 31, 2008

Dr. Samuel Giere

“Preaching Christ During Lent”

Lecture Description:

This course will focus on preaching of Christ crucified specifically rooted in the texts of the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, and conditioned by the context of Lent. We will spend time exploring individual texts and imagining possible preaching trajectories from Ash Wednesday to Palm/Passion Sunday.

Registration information available at

www.wartburgseminary.edu – Lifelong Learners or Continuing Education 563-589-0324.

Cedar Valley/North Iowa Forums

JANUARY 15, 2008

Rev. Wayne Weissenbuehler (*former bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod and “The Lutheran” columnist*)
“Preaching the 2008 Lenten Texts”

FEBRUARY 12, 2008

Dr. Brian Jones (*Associate Professor of Religion at Wartburg College, Waverly*)

1. Creationism and Intelligent Design;
2. Evolution: Understanding and Meeting the Theological Challenge;
3. Darwin Reads the Bible

All Forum meetings are held at Messiah Lutheran Church, 705 Third Ave, Charles City. The cost is \$20 per event (including lunch).

Make checks payable to CEDAR VALLEY FORUM
Mail to: Cedar Valley Forum, c/o Irving Sandberg
103 Crestwood Ave., Waverly, IA 50677

For questions or further information contact:
Paul Nelson at 641-423-4702 or stjamespastor@mchsi.com
or Irving Sandberg at 319-352-0181 or irving@mchsi.com.

Turkey River Forum

JANUARY 21, 2008

Dr. James Nestingen

“Faithfulness in a Time of Resistance”

Trinity Lutheran Church, Hawkeye, Iowa
9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 19, 2008

Dr. Paul Hill

“Coming of Age: Ministry with Young Men”

Zion Lutheran Church, West Union, Iowa
9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., lunch included.

Registrations can be paid on arrival or sent to:
Susan Friedrich, 8224 200th St., West Union, IA 52175

Youth In Mission 2008 Summer Youth Programs

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago announced dates and registration details for its three Youth in Mission programs, Serving Christ in the World, Beyond Belief, and Outdoor Ministry Ambassadors.

Serving Christ in the World will be held at LSTC, in Texas, and in Mexico City June 14 – July 6, 2008. Application deadline is February 20, 2008.

Beyond Belief, formerly a summer program, now offers year-round opportunities for high school youth groups to participate in service activities in Chicago.

To serve youth enrolled in outdoor ministry camps, in June, July and August 2008, Youth in Mission will send seminarians to ELCA Outdoor Ministry programs as ambassadors.

Registration is required at least two months prior to arrival. Because space is limited, register early for a Beyond Belief week during the summer of 2008.

Information on all Youth in Mission programs, including applications and registration forms, is available at www.lstc.edu/yim/ or by calling 800-635-1116 ext. 725. Youth in Mission is also on myspace at www.myspace.com/youth_in_mission.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Northeastern Iowa Synod

Life-Long Learning for Lutherans Winter 2008

*All Registrations due
January 11, 2008*

Class: "The American Religious Experience"
Where: Trinity Lutheran of Mason City with Pastor Steve Palo, Facilitator
Dates: Saturdays - January 26 & February 2,
9 am-4:30 pm

Class: "Biblical Studies: The Epistles"
Where: Sojourn Way of Harpers Ferry with Pastor Helen Beth Kuhens, Facilitator
Dates: Friday & Saturday - January 25 & 26,
6 pm-4:30 pm

Class: "Biblical Studies: The Prophets and Writings"
Where: Zion Lutheran of West Union with AIM Susan Friedrich, Facilitator
Dates: Sundays - January 27, February 3, 10, 17 & 24,
7-9 pm

Class: "How to Read the Book of Revelation" & "The Rapture Racket"
Where: St. Paul Lutheran of Hampton with Pastor David Sorenson, Facilitator
Dates: Sundays - January 27, February 3, 10, 17 & 24,
7-9 pm

For registration and questions contact:
Rev. Helen Beth Kuhens
658 Sojourn Lane, Harpers Ferry, IA 52146
e-mail: sojourn@acegroup.cc

"Good Gifts"
<< *Continued from page 2*

breakfast and have pancakes with honey. A teenaged grandchild might be honored with a fruit tree. For their adult siblings, Wiederaenders and her husband, the Rev. Bob Wiederaenders, select large animals to donate to struggling villages.

"We pretty much do this for family or for someone we know to be the kind of person who would consider it an

honor to receive this type of gift," said Wiederaenders.

While the catalog is great for personal gift-giving, Wiederaenders believes congregations have not considered all that can be done.

"There are some more opportunities to promote this type of giving. Maybe a Sunday school project could be to purchase health-related gifts like mosquito nets, which is only \$10.

Or if you're a nurse, ... maybe the health-related gifts are something you'd also like to use. I'm not big into challenges, but maybe churches could set up a goal featuring one of the (gifts in the catalog). I think we need to be a little pushier with this than we have been."

-Golden is a writer from Waterloo.


ELCA.ORG



harvest OF HOPE

The first offerings for HARVEST OF HOPE have already arrived at the synod office. Materials for conducting the special offering for the New Hope building at Farley are now completed, and have been sent to each congregation. Every pastor received a copy of the promotional DVD at Fall Conference. We hope that these materials will enable your congregation to join in the fun of this special opportunity to do mission work in our state.

Like many helping opportunities, many hands make the work fun and done. If someone needs more information or materials, please call the synod office. God bless you as you plan for your HARVEST OF HOPE.



Obituary

Pastor Donald Flatt died Saturday, October 6, 2007. He was ordained on June 20, 1954 and served as a missionary in Tanganyika, Africa; taught at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; and served as pastor at Austin Messiah Lutheran, Chicago and Luther Memorial, Des Moines until his retirement in 1977. The funeral service was held on Thursday, October 11, 2007, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Dubuque. He is survived by his wife, Ruth Jane and two children, David Flatt and Elizabeth Dixon. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Ruth Jane Flatt, 3129 Hillcrest Road, Apt. 102, Dubuque, IA 52001-3959.