



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Strengthening Leaders

Fair compensation enhances ministries

by Marcia Hahn

If congregations were to pay the going rate for the many roles of their pastors—public speaker, counselor, administrator, teacher, mediator, writer, motivator, worship leader, home visitor—compensation would be well into six figures, beyond the reach of what most congregations could afford.

Fortunately, pastors, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses are called into ministry by God for reasons far beyond the value of their paychecks. Salaries may never truly reflect the advanced degrees and level of expertise that ELCA rostered leaders bring to their ministries, but guidelines from the Northeastern Iowa Synod Compensation Committee can help churches budget for salaries that are fair for both the pastor and congregation.

“It’s hard to know what fair will be,” says committee member Pastor Wayne Hagen. “Most churches don’t have the time or resources to find out what other churches are paying, so the committee looks at as much information as we can gather of what churches and other synods

are doing. It becomes a place to start the conversation.”

The nine-person Compensation Committee annually recommends minimum salary guidelines for congregations to use when calling a pastor or planning their budgets. Those recommendations are approved by the Synod Council and sent to the Synod Assembly for action.



Wayne Hagen

The committee compares salaries on a year-to-year basis, and every three years it obtains salaries from neighboring synods for comparison. The committee also compares the salaries included in annual pastor reports to the Bishop. Only about 38 percent of synod pastors submit salary reports, but of those that do, 62.8 percent are at or near the recommended salary guideline.

Using salary comparisons and cost-of-living adjustments from the Social Security Administration, the Compensation Committee develops a grid showing the minimum salary that rostered persons should be paid for their years of service. The committee aims for minimum salary recommendations that fall in the middle when compared to rural and urban synods in Iowa and the region.

For 2012, the synod’s recommended minimum base salary for ordained pastors with no experi-

ence is \$34,122 plus a parsonage or housing allowance, which is generally 30 percent of the base salary. An increase of \$610 is added

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for each year of service, reaching a minimum base salary of \$49,372 (before housing is added) for pastors with 25 years experience.*

“We try to help churches understand what is the minimal market out there, because if a little church can’t afford a pastor, we need to do something,” says Darrel Gerriets, assistant to the Bishop.

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“We try to enable them to make a wise decision for their ministries.”



Darrel Gerrietts

Total compensation packages go beyond salary

to include a parsonage or housing allowance, continuing education, travel reimbursement, sick leave, health insurance, pension, annuities, vacations, and sabbaticals. A synod worksheet and online calculator on the Portico Benefit Services website can help congregations figure the costs of those benefits. Congregations with small budgets may be able to offer more in benefits, such as vacation days and continuing education opportunities, to offset any salary limitations. Some congregations have offered financial assistance to help new pastors pay off student loans.

Committee members and synod staff are available to consult with congregations that have questions about developing compensation packages. The committee also sponsors the annual “Support of the Call” forum at synod assembly to review the synod compensation guidelines and answer questions. According to Hagen, congregations’ most common questions are related to family and medical leave issues, especially when a pastor needs time away to help an ailing parent or other family member.

“Some congregations say ‘take as much time as needed,’ but sometimes that stretches into weeks or months,” Hagen says. The

committee is researching family leave policies of other organizations, such as the Iowa State Education Association and the Portico Benefit Services, to improve guidelines for churches to set their own policies.

Setting appropriate compensation packages is vital to the pastor and family, and to the life of the church. According to a 2011 ELCA salary survey, the average combined salary and housing compensation of pastors from the Northeastern Iowa

Congregations want very badly to pay a fair salary, and pastors want to receive a fair salary, but they need more information to have an idea of what “fair” is.

Synod is \$55,329.** That figure is generally less than local school administrators or attorneys earn in salary alone, even though pastors’ education requirements are similar.

“Pastors should expect to earn an income that supports them and their families in a lifestyle comparable to that of their parishioners,” Gerrietts says. “How else can they be a partner in ministry?”

Some pastors with spouses who earn incomes try to help their churches’ budgets by offering to work part time or for a salary below minimum guidelines. Other pastors may decline annual raises, but Gerrietts cautions that the pastors may be doing more harm than good. Not taking a raise creates

false assumptions about the true cost of a pastor, leaving the church ill prepared when it’s time to call a new pastor.

“We tell pastors to always take the raise because they can hurt the future of the church if they don’t keep encouraging it to grow in its budget,” Gerrietts explains. “A pastor who hasn’t had a raise in 20 years is destroying the church and making it impossible for a new pastor to come. They can always give the money back as a donation.”

The bottom line, according to Hagen, is that congregations want very badly to pay a fair salary, and pastors want to receive a fair salary, but they need more information to have an idea of what “fair” is. “It’s tough for pastors to say this is what I want, because we’re not supposed to be in it for the money,” Hagen says. “So the committee says it, and that helps pastors negotiate what is sometimes a sticky issue.”

The Synod Compensation Guidelines and Worksheet can be downloaded at www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources.

To use the Portico online contribution amounts calculator, visit www.elcabop.org/Calculators/Contribution-Amounts.aspx.

**The Compensation Committee is recommending a 3.6% base salary increase for 2013, the first increase in three years, subject to approval at Synod Assembly.*

***Based on the ELCA 2011 Salary Survey of ordained ministers serving in congregations June 1, 2011. Figure includes base salary, actual housing allowance paid to the pastor or value assigned to the church-owned parsonage (30% of the base salary), and any Social Security allowance.*

Forget the Church—Follow Jesus

The saints, after all, became known as saints not because of their success in fighting political battles, or winning a few news cycles, or funding an anti-abortion super PAC. They were saints purely and simply because of the way they lived.

“Forget the Church—Follow Jesus” implored the April 9, 2012, *Newsweek* magazine cover.

I wondered, “Do we have to consider this naïve notion once again?” As soon as two or more followers of Jesus get together, there needs to be organization, administration, decisions whether by consensus or vote, a shared vision and mission. In short, as soon as two or more followers of Jesus gather, Jesus is present and so is the church.

However, the article by Andrew Sullivan did not make the argument to “Forget the Church.” Rather, Sullivan argues with clarity and passion that the church needs to behave as the church. He draws on the life of Saint Francis and Jesus to call the church to be “church for the world.”

Francis insisted on living utterly without power over others. As stories of his strangeness and holiness spread, more joined him and he faced a real dilemma: how to lead a group of men, and also some women, in an organization. Suddenly, faith met politics. And it tormented, wracked, and almost killed him. He had to be last, not first. He wanted to be always the ‘lesser brother,’ not the founder of an order.

Sullivan continues:

I have no concrete idea how Christianity will wrestle free of its current crisis, of its distractions and temptations, and above all its enmeshment with the things of this world. But I do know it won't happen by even more furious denunciations of others, by focusing on politics rather than prayer, by concerning ourselves with the sex lives and heretical thoughts of others rather than with the constant struggle to liberate ourselves from what keeps us from God. What Jefferson saw in Jesus of Nazareth was utterly compatible with reason and with the future; what Saint Francis trusted in was the simple,

terrifying love of God for Creation itself. That never ends.

This Christianity comes not from the head or the gut, but from the soul. It is as meek as it is quietly liberating. It does not seize the moment; it lets it be. It doesn't seek worldly recognition, or success, and it flees from power and wealth.



Throughout our assembly, we will focus on “Strengthening Leaders.” The leaders in our synod have evangelical hearts, a love of the church and its mission, a biblical understanding of the stewardship of creation, a commitment to working collegially, and they are ethical in their leadership.

Synod ministries strengthen and develop these kind of leaders. They are leaders who follow Jesus and build up the church.

– Steven L. Ullestad
Bishop, Northeastern Iowa Synod

‘Support of the Call’ Forum

The Compensation Committee offers the “Support of the Call” forum as part of the 2012 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly. This question-and-answer session will review the proposed Synod Compensation Guidelines for 2013 and explore support for leaders in ministry.

The forum will take place Saturday, June 9, 1:30-2:30 p.m., at the Whitehouse Business Center, Room 217, at Wartburg College, Waverly.



God is great and good

By Pastor Nancy Larson
ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

*God is great and God is good,
let us thank him for our food.
By his hands we all are fed.
We thank you God for daily bread.*

Perhaps you learned this table prayer as a young child as I did. Maybe you have even taught it to your own children or grandchildren. On the face of it, this seems to be a simple little prayer. Yet it teaches us all some valuable lessons.

Yes, indeed God is great! Read Genesis 1 and hear again about the power, majesty and might of God who created the heavens and the earth. God's word had the power to call forth all that we see around us and so much more.

God is also good as we find in Genesis 2 when God creates humankind and exhibits compassion and love for this crown of creation. Yes, God knew that this human creation would need companionship and so God reached out with the closeness of God's own touch and created a human partner.

How wonderful for children to learn early in their life and faith development about the greatness and grandeur of God, as well as the love and closeness of God. How wonderful for all of us to realize these truths about God. When we are able to acknowledge God in this simple yet profound way, we are off and running toward a healthy relationship with God.

This basic foundation of faith will shape how we see ourselves and our place in the world. Yes, God is great and God

is good and we thank God for everything—yes, we thank God for "...food and clothing, home and family, daily work and all that I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil." (Martin Luther's explanation to the First Article of the Apostles Creed in the Small Catechism)

God does it all! Yes, this God who is good and great has done it all for us in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!

To download this article or for more stewardship and mission support resources, visit www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/Stewardship-MissionSupport.asp.



Still time to register for Assembly

Early bird registration ended May 8, but voting members and visitors can still register for the Northeastern Iowa Assembly set for June 8-10 at Wartburg College, Waverly.

Every person attending Assembly must be registered. The voting member registration fee is \$190 for those staying on campus; \$140 for commuters. The fee includes three meals on Saturday and two on Sunday.

Any interested person may register as a visitor, but visitors do not have voice or vote. Visitor registration fee is \$160 with on-campus housing and meals; \$110 for commuters with meals; \$60 for commuters without meals.

Registration materials and the agenda can be downloaded at www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources. Call 319-352-1414 to learn more.

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

ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

Rev. Nancy J. Larson – nancy_larson@elca.org

Star Editor

Marcia Hahn – hahn@neiasynod.org

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Send news for the July/August issue to Marcia Hahn by June 15. We welcome story ideas related to the 2012 theme, "Strengthening Leaders."

Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated for use in synod congregations and organizations, with credit to the *Star* newsletter.

Please notify the synod office with name and address changes.

Young Adults in Global Mission



Erik Grayvold

Nearly 60 young adults will spend a year of service with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program beginning in August 2012. They will serve for one year in a congregation, school or social service ministry in an assigned country.

Erik Grayvold of Dubuque will serve in Jerusalem/West Bank. Others in the YAGM program with a connection to the Northeastern Iowa Synod are Alex Clark, Luther College, to serve in South Africa; Sarah Clark-Bridges, Wartburg College, to serve in Mexico; Blake Anderson, Luther College, to serve in the United Kingdom; and Kaia Duffus, daughter of Pastor Scott Duffus, interim at St. Paul, Monona, to serve in Malaysia.

These young adults have powerful, inspiring stories to tell. Consider requesting their newsletters, e-letters or blogs to distribute to your congregations. They may even be able to serve as a resource or speaker for events and gatherings, both before and after their year of service.

Safeguarding God's Children

A session of the "Safeguarding God's Children" workshop will be offered Tuesday, June 5, 9 a.m.-12 noon, at Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point.

Contact Ewalu to register,
563-933-4700.

Welcome Seminary Graduates

The Northeastern Iowa Synod welcomes four seminary graduates open to receive calls within the synod:



Jenna Couch, 2008 graduate in religion from Wartburg College, Waverly; 2012 master of divinity from Wartburg

Theological Seminary (WTS), Dubuque. She served as intern at St. John, Owatonna, Minn. Her husband, Michael, is an electrical engineer.



Scott Roser, 2007 graduate in history from Wartburg College, Waverly; 2012 master of divinity from WTS. He serves as a

munitions specialist staff sergeant with the Wisconsin Air National Guard, Madison, Wis. He completed his internship at Gloria Dei Lutheran, Coos Bay, Ore. He is married to Kara, who is currently studying to be a physician assistant.



Susan Friedrich, 1982 graduate in public service in ag/extension education from Iowa State University, Ames;

2012 master of divinity from WTS. She was commissioned as an associate in ministry in 1991 and served at Zion, West Union, and various interims. She completed her internship at St. Paul, Postville. She is the Life-Long Learning Coordinator for the Northeastern Iowa Synod and is married to Norman, an engineer. They have four children.



Steven Winsor, a geography graduate of the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg, Fla.; 2012 master of divinity

from WTS. He previously was a GIS technician for Delta Seven, St. Petersburg. His internship was at Southwest Iowa Ministry (SWIM), Clarinda, Iowa. His wife, Amy, is a teacher. They have three children.

Life-Long Learning for Lutherans

Living the Good Life: Connecting with Faith in the Real World
Nov. 9-10, 2012

Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point, Iowa

Join this multi-generational retreat for a "connecting" experience to understand how Christ is using us in ministry in our lives, in our homes and in the world. The Rev. Dr. Norma Cook Everist of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, will use Martin Luther's Large Catechism to explore the basics of Christian faith together. This retreat will offer age-appropriate experiences for adults, youth and children of all ages to learn about the relationship between faith and life, and the good life in Christ that God is creating, saving and making holy all around us.

Family accommodations will be at the new Walnut Lodge at Camp Ewalu. To learn more, contact Susan Friedrich, **563-422-6242** or **friedrichsusan@gmail.com**.



Assembly seminars cover range of topics

Fifteen seminars on topics ranging from church buildings to faith shaping will be presented at this year's North-eastern Iowa Synod Assembly, June 8-10. Assembly participants will have an opportunity to attend two of the seminars during Saturday's sessions:

Overview of the ELCA—questions and answers about the ELCA.

What Your Building Says about You—ideas, trends and advice for those considering a building project or wanting to make their building a better ministry tool.

Stewardship: The Gift that Keeps on Giving—an interactive Bible study from the perspective of Paul encouraging generosity among Jesus' followers.

ELCA Malaria Campaign—an update on how this witness to faith in Jesus Christ is helping to fight global hunger.

Are You Called to Share the Faith?—a conversation about the gifts for call to ministry in yourself and others.

Safeguarding God's People—an introduction to new resource materials to help congregations prevent sexual exploitation of adults, as well as children.

The Word of God in Boots—a firsthand account of ministry to those in military service, with resource materials to help congregations minister to those leaving and returning from service.

Strengthening Leaders through a Companion Synod Relationship—an update on the synod's growing relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, with a special guest from Hungary who is serving as a summer counselor at Camp Ewalu.

Strengthening Our Companion Relationships: Why Namibia?—a look at the synod's relationship with the three Lutheran church bodies in Namibia, including photos, experiences and

stories from those who have visited Namibia in 2012 and 2009.

Spiritual Parenting, Grandparenting and Godparenting—tips and tools for sharing the faith and being the primary faith shaper in the lives of kids.

Faith Shapers—ideas and insights to encourage families to pass on the faith, develop family friendly worship services, and connect congregational activities to faith practices at home.

ELCA Hunger Basics—an introduction

to the mission and ministry of ELCA World Hunger.

Strengthening Leaders in Youth Ministry—a broad overview and practical resources for Youth and Family Ministry in the 21st century.

Leading through Prayer, Advocacy and Service—A conversation about Partnering with Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI)—a look at the partnerships between LSI and congregations.

LSI offers new 'First Circle Friends' ministry

Churches are invited to join a new opportunity to help their neighbors who may be facing memory loss and to help the family members who care for them.



The First Circle Friends ministry—sponsored by LSI (Lutheran Services in Iowa), a shared ministry partner of the Iowa synods of the ELCA—meets twice a month at partner churches from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. First Circle Friends volunteers provide a day of renewal, friendship and support for people with memory loss and their family caregivers.

The trained volunteers are matched one-on-one with participants for a day of cognitively stimulating activities, such as music, games, light exercise, painting, and discussion groups. Meanwhile, family caregivers can enjoy a day off to rest and rejuvenate themselves for their caregiving role.

First Circle Friends is based on a successful Minnesota model, where the program began with one church partner and grew to more than 30 participating congregations. Lutheran Services in America (LSA) is now promoting this model nationally, and LSI is one of the first agencies to implement it.

"This is a great outreach opportunity for congregations to get involved beyond the walls of their church," said Kara Ullestad, LSI's First Circle Friends coordinator. "It's also an opportunity for church members to learn new skills. The volunteer training is in-depth and has continuing education available."

LSI is currently seeking First Circle Friends church host sites, beginning in the greater Des Moines area, with hopes to expand to other sites throughout Iowa. LSI provides ongoing support and training for churches and volunteers, and oversees the assessment process to determine whether an individual would be appropriate for the program.

To learn more, contact Kara Ullestad, LSI First Circle of Friends coordinator, at **515-271-7408** or email kara.ullestad@LSIowa.org.

JUNE EVENTS

- 5 **Event**, Safeguarding God's Children, Ewalu, Strawberry Point, 9 a.m.-noon
- 7 **Network**, Youth and Family, Redeemer, Waverly, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 8-10 **Event**, Synod Assembly, Wartburg College, Waverly
- 11-12 **Office Closed**
- 14 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 16 **Event**, Synodical Women's Organization Convention, Wartburg College, Waverly

JULY EVENTS

- 4 **Office Closed**, Independence Day Observation
- 12 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 18-22 **Event**, ELCA Youth Gathering, New Orleans, La.
- 27-Aug. 1 **Event**, WIYLDE, Luther College, Decorah

AUGUST EVENTS

- 1 **Event**, WIYLDE, Luther College, Decorah
- 3 **Meeting**, Candidacy Committee, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 9 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 30 **Meeting**, SAFE Team, conference call, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

- 3 **Office Closed**, Labor Day Observance
- 13 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Meeting, First Call Theological Education executives, conference call, 10 a.m.-noon
- 15 **Event**, Fall Leadership (Networks, LYO, Synod Council) 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- 27 **Gathering**, Wartburg Conference Mission Support, St. John, Nashua, 7-8:30 p.m.
Meeting, Fall Conference Planning, 2-4 p.m.

OBITUARY

Pastor Kermit Roisen died April 8, 2012. He was ordained on May 17, 1953. He was a missionary in Madagascar from 1953-1968 and then served as assistant pastor at St. Paul, Omaha, Neb.; pastor at Little Sioux and Okoboji Bible Camp, Milford, Iowa; and as associate pastor at Zion United, Clear Lake, until his retirement on Dec. 31, 1990.

A memorial service took place April 22 at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, West Des Moines, Iowa. Pastor Roisen is survived by his wife, Marian, and six children. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Paul Roisen, 4420 3rd Ave, Sioux City, IA 51106.

For a complete obituary, visit www.albertleatribune.com/2012/04/13/rev-kermit-roisen-86-des-moines-iowa.