

Companion Synod Team

Do you know anyone named Buthelezi? Or Sibiya? Or Lwandle? Because of the Companion Synod program of the ELCA, many people in the Southwest Minnesota Synod of the ELCA not only are familiar with these names but know brothers and sisters in Christ from the Kwa Zulu Natal Province of South Africa with Zulu names, faces, families and friends.

Since our assembly last met, over fifty people from our synod have traveled from Minnesota to the South-Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa which is located mainly in the Kwa Zulu Natal Province of South Africa. Many of these travelers have visited our companion diocese for two and even three times.

Our goals for this travel is that Christians in our synod and in our companion diocese can get to know each other, share their faith in Jesus with each other, and find ways to share ministry that will help faith to grow in both places.

We continue to see some of our conferences develop their relationships with circuits in the South-Eastern Diocese as visits are exchanged and ministry is shared. We have seen development projects in circuits grow under the guidance of circuit committees and with advice and support from our conferences, including a project developing through the labor of young people that may see rabbits raised for the benefit of communities.

We continue to see relationships grow as groups plan ways to achieve ministry and support with each other through scholarships in the diocese and individual circuits.

We hope that our plans for supporting an HIV/AIDS coordinator to work within the diocese will continue to develop as more discussions are held in this year.

Many members of our synod now have participated in a summer bike ride that has benefited companion synod work. We're happy to have plans developing to expand this project and hope that many more congregations and members of our synod can become involved in spending time riding bikes through our beautiful countryside this coming summer and sharing faith along the way.

Watch for more information on this Bike Tour and other companion synod activities by clicking on the companion synod link at our synod's website www.swmnelca.org.

As always, we urge each member of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and each congregation to regularly pray for our relationships with brothers and sisters in the South-Eastern Diocese. In this World recession, our faith can sustain us, and sharing ministry can help us all to share the Good News we have that God loves all people and wants us to proclaim the presence of that good God in all parts of our planet.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie K. Nelson, Chair
Zion Lutheran Church, Litchfield, MN

Members of the team: Chair Marie Nelson, Litchfield; Jim Branstad, St. James; LaVaun Danielseon, Franklin; Rev. Ted Kunze, Slayton; Kris Lehman, St. Cloud; Rev. Mark Little, Buffalo Lake; Julayne Mayer, Willmar; Rev. David Nelson, Annandale; Rev. Harvery Nelson, Litchfield; Curtis Nordaune, Montevideo; Rev. John Ragan, Wheaton; Marvin Rothfusz, Glencoe; Irene Sansness, Cyrus; Rev. Kerry Selseth, Willmar; Rev. Grady St. Dennis, St. Peter; Rev. Rebecca Sullivan, Mankato; and Synod Minister Rev. Linda Pedersen



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Serving Christ's Mission: Engaging Leaders Board

This newly structured board combines both the previous Board for Church in Society and the Board for Ministry. It will coordinate within the synod the work of advocacy, peace and justice, hunger concerns, and agricultural, land and environmental stewardship by (a) educating members of the synod; (b) supporting congregations, task forces (such as the Moral Deliberation Task Force), agencies (such as the Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota), and other groups; and (c) initiating programs, conferences, and other activities. It will also assist the synod in the preparation and support of rostered leaders (pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers) who serve within the synod and throughout the ELCA. Much of the work is done in committees that (a) draft policies and procedures and work with candidates for ministry; (b) support and encourage those in specialized ministries (non-parish); and (c) develop events, resources and policies (such as the compensation guidelines) to support these partners.

Interests and Gifts

A commitment to Christ, a concern for Christ's whole church and for the particular ministry of this synod is essential. In addition, members will likely have an interest in helping Christians explore and follow through on the implications of faith for daily living and for the shape of congregational and broader church life in relation to our society, as well as have empathy with the work of our rostered leaders. Prior opportunities to understand the daily routines of pastors and other church staff, gifts for listening and interviewing, and/or experience in congregation leadership are all useful gifts for members of this board.

The Engaging Leaders Board talked with three seminary grads this past spring to learn more about them, what encouraged them to pursue their call, financial issues or concerns, their impressions of the synod so far and also viewpoints of the two spouses that were in attendance.

Pastor Joyce handed out the recently updated Synod Goals and Objectives along with the Engaging Leaders Board goals and objectives. Discussion took place on reviewing the documents. No action was taken.

Compensation Guidelines: Discussion took place on unemployment compensation for lay and rostered leaders. It was recently brought to Pastor Joyce's attention that a lay leader in a synod congregation was not aware that there was no unemployment compensation for lay leaders in church congregations and discussion took place on the wording presently in the synod handbook regarding benefits for lay and rostered leaders. Pastor Leonard suggested that maybe a statement should be placed in the handbook under the benefits section stating something to the effect: "Please be aware that Unemployment Compensation normally is not part of the benefits package provided to rostered and lay leaders in a congregation. Consult the MN State Agency for compensation requirements." Pastor Joyce said she would have a lawyer review the statement and make a recommendation that could be placed in the 2009-2010 synod handbook.

Health Risk Assessment: Discussion took place on the response from rostered leaders in the synod. According to Pastor Joyce, approximately 90 people still need to take the assessment to meet their goal and the final day was March 29th. The Southwestern Minnesota Synod is only at about 60% of the total number that have taken the HRA and that is not enough to meet goal to receive a discount on health insurance rates along with payment to those who take the assessment. Discussion took place on ways to encourage more to participate in the future. No action taken.

Updates: Short reports and discussions took place on updating those in attendance on a number of topics, including: debt reduction through a newly developed SW MN Synod Endowment; "Book of Faith" programs going on throughout the Synod; Boundary Awareness Training; Candidacy; Fall Theological Conference; and the soon-to-be signed Roman Catholic/Lutheran Covenant with the SW MN Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church.

Disaster Response: The Southwestern Minnesota Synod has discussed looking into setting up a Disaster Response Team at a synod level for helping to mobilize in the event of future disasters at any level. We have received an invitation to a team of ELCA, SWMN leaders, to join their trainer for a “train the trainer” event on the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program.

Pastor Self Defense: We are exploring the possibility of teaching basic self-defense to pastors at our Fall Theological Conference in 2010.

Respectively submitted,

Ferman Woodberry, Co-Chair
Garfield Lutheran Church, Madison, MN

Members of the board: Co-Chair Rev. Grant Fischer, Atwater; Co-Chair Ferman Woodberry, Madison; Rev. Marianne Zitzewitz, St. Cloud; Mary Jo Forbord, Starbuck; Rev. Jeff Sackett, Clear Lake; Rev. Jay Grave, Milan; Laurie Ziemke, Tracy; Larry Eekhoff, Renville; Stephanie Hall, Jasper; Rev. D.J. Lura, Annandale; Synod Council Liaison Rev. Marlaine Doidge; and Synod Minister Rev. Joyce Piper



Serving Christ's Mission: Equipping Congregations Board

Mission: The role of the Equipping Congregations Board within the Southwestern Minnesota Synod is to help congregations in their mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. The board consists of lay and clergy members of synod congregations. The members meet several times a year to assist in setting goals in the following areas of congregational life: Christian education and nurture for all ages and the practice of worship and understanding of the sacraments. In 2009 we planned and implemented new ideas and activities to create enthusiasm and excitement to fulfill our mission.

Synod All Board Day was on October 3, 2009 hosted by Our Savior's Lutheran, Sacred Heart. Presentations were made by:

- * Faith Builders by Pastor Steve Carmany
- * 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly's actions and decision and the adoption of *Sexuality Statement Human Sexuality Gift and Trust* by Pastor Linda Pedersen

Healthy Congregation Events on January 30, 2010 hosted by Immanuel Lutheran, Atwater, MN.

Passing on the Faith was scheduled for November 7, 2009 but has been rescheduled for May 2010.

Congregational Leadership Day on February 20, 2010 hosted by Cross of Calvary Lutheran, Olivia, MN.

Other topics discussed and being looked into are the Book of Faith Task Force, Stewardship Ministries, communications for smaller congregations, Healthy Congregation Assessments, and Worship Team.

Resource Service Center: The board supports the work of the Resource Service Center. We are very thankful for the great job Sara Johnson does at keeping us all aware of what they have to offer us in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and by supplying displays at meetings and Synod Assembly for all to see and enjoy.

Youth Ministry: Our board continues to receive reports from the Synod Youth Coordinator, Sarah Hausken, regarding their newest ministries that they offer to our youth (God's work. Our hands.), the Timothy Project, youth gatherings, the National Youth Gathering, and many other youth projects.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Huizenga, Chair

First English Lutheran Church, Ortonville, MN

Members of the board: Chair Scott Huizenga, Ortonville; Vice-Chair Rev. Janine Olson, St. Cloud; Secretary Rev. Duane Baun, Hendricks; Rev. Michael Nelson, Cokato; Barb Gerde, Glenwood; Rev. Ron Hanson, Willmar; Rev. Robert Lehner, Stewart; Gail Klause, Redwood Falls; Mary Lou Bjugan, Jasper; Karen Koeder, Trimont; Lindsey Cartwright, Windom; Synod Council Liaison Jane Wolle, St. James; and Synod Minister Rev. Linda Pedersen



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Long Range Planning Committee

The Synod Long Range Planning Committee serves to help the synod anticipate and prepare for fulfilling God's mission in our context in the next five to ten years. Organized in 2002, this committee's work embraces both a concern for Christ's whole church, and for the particular ministry of this synod. The Committee currently includes: Gwen Arneson, Cottonwood; Ed Carter, Walnut Grove; Kevin Eye, Hanley Falls; Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds, LaSalle; Rev. Bill Klavetter, Redwood Falls; Rev. Julius Miller, Hancock, Rev. Dee Pederson, St. Cloud; Karen Pfeifer, Worthington; Rev. Larry Strenge, Director for Evangelical Mission; Carlton Urdahl, Litchfield; and Bishop Jon Anderson. Also serving this year were Rev. Barb Johnson, Willmar and Deb Ahlrich, Clearwater. David Anfinson, Willmar, joins the committee in 2010. The committee meets approximately four times per year, and participates in events such as the fall leadership day and planning days for the Synod Council and members of the Synod Boards.

The committee grounds its work in the Word and prayer, engages in dialogue, listens for God's voice, keeps in mind the purpose statement in our synod constitution, and values the voices of our synod members and partners. Our work continues to be challenged by extremely difficult economic times that have impacted individuals, congregations, agencies, and our church's partner institutions. Add to this the challenge of conflicted relationships in many congregations and trends in high school graduation rates, and we recognize the reality of the challenges that surround us. And yet, as we look to the future, we recognize that our current context also holds many assets and opportunities, including growing numbers of people coming to parts of the area to retire, and growing cultural and racial diversity among the new neighbors in our communities. The task of this committee is to look at these changes and wonder how God is calling and leading us into the future and saying, "Do not be afraid," "Be strong and of good courage," and "Lo, I am with you always even to the close of the age."

The work of this committee continues to be informed by a number of documents. A Synod Mission Statement was adopted by the Synod Assembly in 1994. In 2005 a Synod Vision Statement was created, and the committee has worked extensively with the direction it provides – *Living in Christ's Mission: Engaging Leaders, Equipping Congregations, Serving in God's World*. Since 2007, the Long Range Planning Committee received input from congregations and synod leaders to help develop goals and objectives that further define and move forward each of the Vision Statement's three parts. This year we wanted to invite people across the synod to be able to have conversations about this Vision Statement, so we sought multiple opportunities for both conversation and feedback. At the 2009 Synod Assembly, participants had conversation around tables and provided feedback on the question, "In our part of God's mission field, in this chapter in our history, what tools do we need to better engage leaders, equip conversations, and serve in God's world?" Opportunities for conversation and feedback were also provided at the All Boards Day, the Synod Church Staff Workers Retreat, and the Fall Theological Conference. In December 2009 and January 2010, the committee refined the goals and objectives from a lengthy six page document to a two page summary. We enter 2010 with goals and objectives that will continue to be refined as our context continues to change, but with realistic markers for our key roles and responsibilities and a focus for the energies of our synod.

The committee welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Synod Anti-Racism Team to learn how the church can grow to fully include people of all cultures and races in our communities. Rev. Larry Strenge, Southwestern Minnesota Synod's Director for Evangelical Mission, joined the committee in August. His position represents the way the ELCA is decentralizing efforts for evangelism and the development of mission partnerships. The Mission Covenant, with which he works, helps our synod consider how we

can have intentional engagement for new and renewed evangelizing congregations, for mission support and stewardship education, and for mission strategies throughout the communities of our synod. The committee also noted how other ELCA Synods are engaged in long-range planning, and observed what we can learn from their processes.

The Long range Planning Committee gives thanks to God for your prayers and for the insights and ideas you have shared as we serve God's mission together - in farms, towns, and cities.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dee Pederson, Chair
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Cloud, MN



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Lutheran Youth Organization

This year was another exciting year for the Lutheran Youth Organization board. It was a busy year filled with change and new experiences. We worked very hard and had tons of fun. We accomplished everything in three meetings and two youth gatherings. This year was my third and final year on the board and each year I continue to be amazed by the work that God does through us. It truly is God's work, Our hands!

We started off the year by meeting at Gustavus Adolphus College during the Synod Assembly. This was a very exciting meeting. Not only did we get a lot of work done in planning for the gatherings, but we got to talk with Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and Rev. Sikhathesihle Khumalo and Moses Mahlangu, our friends from South Africa. We also held our second annual boomer ball game, learned to swing dance, and canoed the Minnesota River. It was a very fun and productive time.

The Lutheran Youth Organization Convention was held at the University of Southern Mississippi in the days following the national youth gathering in New Orleans. Eight youth from the 2008-2009 LYO board and our fearless leader, Sarah Hausken, represented our synod. The theme was "Open Eyes, Open Mind, Open Heart," based on Jeremiah 29:11-13. We elected a new board of the Lutheran Youth Organization and passed lots of resolutions. Most of the resolutions were strongly encouraging activism, awareness and good stewardship. We enjoyed meeting and learning from other youth from across the ELCA.

Our next meeting was in September at the synod offices to plan the Junior High Gathering. We divided the work load again this year using servant teams and we were very productive. We knew we were right on track for an awesome gathering! We also took some time to discuss the Churchwide Assembly and the implications their actions will have on our board, especially the 10% youth involvement change in the constitution. It was yet another great meeting for the LYO board.

The Junior High Gathering was held in Willmar. We moved the gathering back to the Holiday Inn this year and it went smoothly, as it always does. The theme was "Whatever, Wherever" based on Philippians 4: "Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the one who makes me who I am." The band, Shasta Boulevard, was awesome. They did a great job of getting the youth fired up and excited about Christ. Our speaker was Kris Causton and she did a great job as well. Chaplain Jeff Engholm brought it all together for us. Thanks to everyone who participated, it was a fun, meaningful, and moving event.

There was still more fun to come after that! In January we met at Green Lake Bible Camp to plan the Senior High Gathering. We got a lot done and enjoyed the beautiful winter weather on the lake.

Our Senior High Youth Gathering was in Mankato in March. The theme was "Are You Hungry?" based on Matthew 25:40. We switched this to a one-night event in hope to increase participation. Singer Rachel Kurtz was both our band and speaker for this gathering. Her jazzy voice and warm personality were very well received. Here we elected a new board and took care of some other business. The Senior High Gathering is always a great experience. It is so awesome to see so many senior high kids having fun and praising God while doing it.

The LYO board is such a great asset to our synod. We are very lucky to have such involved and gifted youth. I am thankful that we are so supportive of our youth. Anyone who has ever been involved in LYO will tell you what a big impact it has on their faith lives. Isn't that what we're all about here in the ELCA - reaching out with our hands to do God's work? I think so. 😊

Peace,

Brittani Lamb, LYO Board President
First Lutheran Church, St. Peter, MN



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Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee met on November 11, 2009 and will meet via conference call on February 11, 2010.

On November 11, our committee met to conduct the yearly staff reviews with both the pastoral and support staff and everyone was available in person for their review. Our committee was very pleased with the work and the performance of the entire synod staff during this past year. They are competent and diligent in their work responsibilities and their calling to do God's work in our Synod. Our committee recommended that we restore raises for 2010 at a 3% increase with benefits, and recommended for 2011 a 3.5% increase with benefits.

Staff changes this past year included adding the EOCM ministry with Pastor Larry Strenge joining the team, and Marlis Jacobson will be transiting to 4-days a week starting February 1, 2010.

On February 11, our committee will meet to review the Fair Labor Law and the personnel policy regarding exempt and non-exempt employees and other agenda items that come before us.

Members of the committee: Gwen Arneson, Synod Council Liaison, Cottonwood; Mark Beito, Sleepy Eye; Rev. Alan Bray, St. Peter; Rev. Kathy Hartley, New London; Tim Ostby, Willmar; and Chair Julie Rath, Renville.

Bishop Anderson participates in each meeting, makes recommendations, and assists with the decision making process.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rath, Chair

First Lutheran Church, Renville, MN



SMART

Southwestern Minnesota Anti-Racism Team

Vision Statement

The mission of SMART is to help our synod live out the Great Commandment which is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and **love your neighbor** as yourself (Mark 12:30).”

We seek to do this by helping to equip congregations to fulfill the Great Commission which is to “Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19).”

Understanding our commitment to love and to make disciple, we will lead the community of faith **to acknowledge and repent of the sin of racism**, as we help the Southwestern Minnesota Synod fulfill the vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning racism.

Our goal is to help the synod become more racially inclusive by addressing the twin realities of white privilege and systemic racism in our churches. We believe that racism can be dismantled through the work of Spirit, prayer, Bible study, education, advocacy, and collaboration with individuals and/or groups within the synod.

As forgiven children of God, we affirm that this work is mandated by the Spirit -- in the Holy Bible -- as evidenced by John’s revelation of The Church of God. He stated, “After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.” (Revelation 7:9)

May God hasten the day that the ELCA looks like this vision of heaven!

Mission Statement

As forgiven children of God and through the work of the Holy Spirit we will help congregations

- learn to love all our neighbors
- acknowledge and repent of the sin of racism
- become one tribe of many people and languages

Our major accomplishment this year has been to finalize a vision and a mission statement and to have a link on the synod website. (Look for us in the left column under Mission/Outreach.)

Our team has increased to include Rev. Bobbi Bell, Rev. Janine Olson, Ms. Michelle Peterson, and Mr. James Puotyual. Rev. Larry Strenge has come onboard as our synod liaison person. We are now working to define the responsibilities of each member of the team. We are also defining what it means to be part of the team and what the commitment will be.

Some of our team members were able to participate in Dismantling Racism training provided by The Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI). This training is phase one of a three part training that not only defines terms and looks at why racism needs to be dismantled but also will help our team look at our synod and its congregations to see how racism is at work within the institution.

Members of our team have had opportunities to do some education within our synod. We had a workshop on White Privilege at the 2009 Synod Assembly and led worship at both the 2009 assembly and 2009 Fall Theological Conference. Ferman and Eunice Woodberry have been asked to lead a discussion at the Lac Qui Parle conference pastors' meeting and will also be leading a one day workshop on dismantling racism with the confirmation classes from Borgund, Minnesota Valley, Louisburg, and Garfield Lutheran Churches in the Madison area.

Our goals for 2010 are to:

- continue to develop our identity as a team
- continue to develop our identify within the synod
- educate our team members
- analyze the demographics of our synod in order to direct the teams efforts

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Eunice Woodberry

Garfield Lutheran Church, Madison, MN

Members of the team: Chair Rev. Naomi Mahler, Willmar; Rev. Yolanda Lehman, St. Cloud; Rev. Pablo Obregon, Willmar; Rev. Janine Olson, St. Cloud; Rev. Dee Pederson, St. Cloud; Rev. Kathryn Skoglund, Montevideo; Rev. Eunice Woodberry, Madison; Ferman Woodberry, Madison; Rev. Bobbi Bell, Belgrade; Michelle Peterson, Spicer; James Puotyual, St. Cloud; and Rev. Larry Strenge, Director for Evangelical Mission



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Stewardship Committee

Mission Statement

God places us in cities, farms and towns together under one prairie sky.
The Risen Christ surprises us with opportunities to plant God's Word in the world.
Walking together in confidence, we cultivate life-giving congregations,
Nurture partner ministries, and cooperate in the life of the ELCA.
By God's grace, together we have what we need.

Our Mission Interpreters (MI), Coralyn Dahl, Orin Dahl and Terrylea Ness continued their efforts to contact each congregation. It is through their training at the National ELCA office and meeting with other MI's from across the country that ideas are being developed to give timely, informative presentations to inform our synod leaders and congregations of effective good practices of stewardship for the sake of the poor and oppressed of the world. This is of utmost importance in today's world. You can invite these Mission Interpreters to your congregations by calling the synod office. The MI's are adaptable and able to speak to church councils, during coffee hour, pulpit supply message focusing on stewardship, the youth and the Women of the ELCA groups.

We had our "popcorn" available at synod assembly and as always draw a large crowd. It gives us a brief moment to connect with the voting members attending the assembly. This last June we had a new brochure available that focused on our synod and many other items available from the national ELCA office. We also made person to person contact through a "Lollipop." It contained information regarding the Mission Interpreters availability.

Money Leadership for Thriving Congregations, a program put out by the national office was presented in April to volunteers willing to present it to other congregations. This event is a new ELCA resource and Pastor John Kroschel, new to our committee, helped pilot this course. This is one resource well worth the time to attend and learn new skills.

The Stewardship Committee was a leader in using webinars for presentations to congregations. We offered the same topic three times last August through September and the number of congregations that participated in this experiment was a good start in what we hope will become a way of holding information events without a lot of driving by anyone. One only needs to drive into their church to see the presentation on the computer and have contact by phone for questions. Bishop Jon started each presentation with a short Bible study. To be aware of these presentations contact the synod office or your pastor for further information.

We are thankful to see the stewardship practices that are being used within our synod. We are making available on the synod stewardship website short little blips and stories that church secretaries can add into bulletins or newsletters or bulletin inserts. Stewardship comes in many different formats and these resources will give you new ideas on what stewardship actually is — a way of living in God's world.

Special thanks to committee members for their contributions in 2009: Stewardship Coordinator Pr. Larry Strenge of our SW MN synod staff, Orin and Coralyn Dahl, St. Cloud; Pr. Tom Heyd, Becker; Pr. Steven Olson, Dassel; Pr. John Kroschel, St. Cloud; and Terrylea Ness, Hector.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrylea Ness, Chair
First Lutheran Church, Hector, MN



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Women in the ELCA

The twenty-second annual convention of the Southwestern Minnesota Synodical Women of the ELCA was held May 7-8, 2009 at First Lutheran Church in Marshall. Through songs, speakers and decorations we followed the theme "Come to the Waters...the Journey Continues." First Lutheran Church was a perfect place for our theme with its 'river' of flowing water in the floor tiles that starts at each entrance, flows to the middle of the narthex where the two streams become one and continues through the "flowing font" to the altar. Featured speakers were Pastor Bob Dahl, Marshall; Bishop Jon Anderson; Pastor Corey Bjertness, New London; Pastor Pablo Obregon, Willmar; and Jody Hills, Cottage Grove. Our evening concert was presented by Pastor David Christenson and family from Lutheran Campus Ministry in Marshall. Seventeen workshops were offered as well as 28 displays. Convention attendance was 317 with 122 voting delegates and 195 visitors and guests. A total offering of \$12,514.25 was divided: 50% churchwide W/ELCA, 25% House of Hope in Marshall and 25% divided between Lutheran Disaster Response and Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. In-Kind offerings were given to Project Comfort, International Christian Literature Distributors and to Honduras (diapers, toys, baby caps, toiletries) – so many we hardly knew what to do with them!!

Nine first-time attendees received scholarships: Linda Blackwelder, Shirley R. Brackenbury, Alberta Brown, Lois Falksen, Joan M. Hegge, Jean Larson, Doreen A. Mages, Wanette Neske, and Danielle Olson. Mentors for the scholarship recipients were Jan Anderson of the Shetek conference and Karen Kleene of the Lac qui Parle conference. Elected to serve a two year term are: Vice-President Marie Henriksen, Secretary Pam Tracey, and board members at-large: Sonja Farmer, Doris Holm, Algene Larson, and Marlys Pearson.

In September 100 conference officers and board members attended our Leadership Workshop/Officer Training at Cross of Calvary Lutheran Church in Olivia. Pastor Matt Hausken introduced the Bible study on Romans and Sarah Hausken closed the day with quiet devotions. Conference Mission Action chairs chose the 2010 In-Kind offering.

We continue to use our quarterly newsletter, the Communicator, as our way of keeping the women of our synod informed. For financial reasons, some physical changes have been made to the Communicator. Kim Louwagie, Cottonwood, is the editor.

Attending nine out of the ten Conference Fall Gatherings was a joy for me. Almost 1,000 women attended these gatherings where we experienced a wide variety of speakers, music and presentations. These women also gave an amazing number/amount of In-Kind offerings. Many churches, conferences and individuals were also busy making hundreds of knitted wool caps, sleeping bag liners and quilts for troops going to Iraq and Afghanistan. II Corinthians 9:12 NIV "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God".

Respectfully submitted,

Marion McCrory, Women of the ELCA President



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