



Upstate New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Annual Report to Congregations

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' Isaiah 52:7

Resurrection People: We welcome new mission - *God is doing amazing things in and among us!*

We are thrilled to announce the birth of South Wedge Mission, Rochester, NY. This new mission is led by a very creative and talented mission developer: the Rev. Matthew Nickoloff—ordained and commissioned in September.



The South Wedge Mission is born through your generous mission support—including Synod, Churchwide and area congregations, as well as the process of Holy Closure of Peace Lutheran Church. Recognizing that God's mission continues, Peace is giving their building to this new mission endeavor.

Your mission support is making Jesus known—allowing new mission endeavors like South Wedge Mission to reach out to the unchurched, those who would not normally enter “traditional” congregations. Welcome!!

Pray First: Ordinations, Installations, Consecrations and Commissioning!

In 2012, 24 pastors and 1 Associate in Ministry received new calls to 30 congregations, ministries and/or ecumenical partnerships. (The average is 16 per year.) Of these, five are first call pastors (newly ordained) and one a first call Associate in Ministry (newly commissioned). We have had eight ordinations, which included one person who is called to the New England Synod and one commissioning.



Walk Together: with Zimbabwe

It was a privilege to host three visitors from our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), for two weeks in early summer. Bishop Stephen and Mrs. Elfina Dube, as well as General Secretary M.M. Dube (no relation), sang and prayed their way across the synod, visiting in rural and urban areas from Central Bridge to Jamestown. They participated fully in our Synod Assembly, including time with Youth Convo. Mrs. Dube also connected with our synod's Women of the ELCA. This visit was supported by many people who helped with hosting, transportation and finances. Special thanks go to Beth Walker and the Global Mission Team which she chairs. Planning continues for future visits and exchanges. Walking together with our global partners changes our perspective and encourages and inspires us for mission in Christ's name.



Staff Changes

We welcomed Rev. Judith VanOsdol as Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) and Assistant to the Bishop and gave thanks for the work of Beth Yenchko as Interim Director for Evangelical Mission.



For the latest synod information be sure to visit our website, <http://upstatenysynod.org>.



Change Lives: Pathways to Renewal in Mission

- Every baptized believer a missionary,
- Every congregation a mission station,
- Every leader a mission director!

How effective is your mission station? In August, a team of twenty-two leaders, both clergy and lay— from every conference of our Synod—attended a “Train the Trainer” event, sponsored by the ELCA’s Churchwide Renewal team. These leaders, along with other trained specialists, will form the basis of our Synod’s Mission Teams, **to accompany congregational work in renewal, growth, mission focus, outreach, etc.**

What is God calling each of us and our mission station (congregation) to be and do? These renewal specialists are trained to accompany congregations as they seek to answer that call. Our hope and commitment is that every congregation has access to human and material resources, training, coaching, renewal work, in order to fully discern and follow where God is calling to follow in faith, into a future where God is already present!

Transformational Ministry equips congregational transformation/renewal teams to engage the congregation in a journey to become centered in:

- identity (Who are we?);
- purpose (Why are we here?), and
- re-rooting in our context (Who is our neighbor?)

The Transformational Ministry journey is designed to help EACH congregation think, perceive, and behave as a missional congregation. It is designed to create a sense of holy urgency leading the congregation into God’s preferred future for its mission and ministry (missional vocation).

Receive news from around the synod, stories about mission and more delivered straight to your inbox! Sign up for the Upstate Update on the right hand column of our website today. <http://upstatenysynod.org>.

Walk Together: Finances

Financial challenges continue in this fiscal year. **THANK YOU** to congregations current or ahead in their mission commitment! **Congratulations to Southern Tier and Southwest Conferences:** 100% of their congregations have given mission support already. Support continues to lag behind budget – down \$33,492 from last year. Spending cuts again this year gave a positive bottom line.

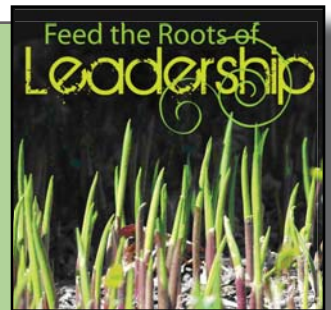
- 47% of congregations are at or ahead of their commitment for 2012;
- 36% of congregations are behind and
- 23% of our congregations have given no mission support.

Good news: the **Feed the Roots campaign deficit has been paid** and the campaign continues toward its goal. The 2011 Synod Council decision, with Churchwide consultation, to reduce our support from 47.3% to 40% continues this fiscal year. The 2013 Mission Proposal recommends raising our Churchwide mission support to 42%. **We walk together in God’s mission and ministry through your Mission Support**, both within our synod and in the wider church. Without this, we may need to further cut program and outreach.

Calling all congregations: Please submit your 2013 mission commitment as soon as possible to help the Finance committee finalize their work to support mission and ministry across the synod and beyond. The form is available in the “synod documents” section of the website. Blessings on the mission we share in Christ Jesus!

Feed the Roots of Leadership

We have already received over \$730,000 in donations and pledges supporting Outdoor Ministries, Campus Ministries and Seminary Scholarships in our synod. \$239,515 was distributed in 2012 to support God’s work in these areas. We invite all congregations to consider a special event between Epiphany and Easter in support of the campaign – ideas some congregations have already used include wine and cheese event, chicken biscuit dinner and special offerings.



Search for us on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube where we maintain a presence. Last



year 510 people viewed our synod assembly via webcasts.



Resurrection people who pray first, walk together and change lives