



Upstate New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE Conference Assembly - Fall 2010

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, "Rejoice!"

Phillipians 4:1

We are Resurrection People

Aligning for mission is bringing change, which is always hard. For synod staff this means adjusting work patterns and trying out new ways of working together. We trust that God is at work in this doing a new thing and bringing us new life. Only Bishop Marie Jerge and Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson serve the synod as full time pastoral staff. As of September 1, Pastor David Preisinger now shares his time equally between Holy Spirit, Albany and synod staff. Conference deans are shouldering more responsibility as they become the first point of contact for congregations and rostered leaders. In addition more people across the synod are being invited to take on more meaningful ministry and leadership. There will certainly be bumps along the way, but we are learning new ways of operating, developing communication systems to support this work and continually asking how our work together helps us to live more fully into our shared mission. We anticipate further work in aligning for mission as our consultant, Mark Betley, begins to work with the Synod Council, at their invitation.

We Pray First

Those who attended the 2010 Synod Assembly invested nearly five hours studying the book of Phillipians through three different interactive Bible studies as we practiced praying first throughout our Assembly in Bible study, worship and prayer. Through the musical gifts shared by John Schwartz, Ade Adu, Jim Roberts, Lori Orłowski, Sarah Goebel, Convo Youth and Y'ALL, the assembly choir and other musicians, we rejoiced in all things and gave voice to our prayer through song.

This fall marks the beginning of another Book of Faith initiative called 52 Great Verses of the Bible. You're invited to memorize one Bible verse every week for the next year. The idea for 52 Great Verses of the Bible came from Pastor Paul Shoop at Immanuel, Webster. Every week a new verse will be posted on the Synod's website and Facebook page. Consider spending some time each week memorizing that verse, or use it as the basis for your own daily devotion and prayer. This is another way we can walk together in our praying first, even when we are spread across great distances. Visit Book of Faith at the synod website (www.upstatenysynod.org) to learn more.

Walk Together

In Response to 2009 Churchwide Assembly Actions - The Bishop and staff continue to visit congregations that wish to discuss 2009 Churchwide Assembly actions. Since our last report to conference assemblies, four additional congregations have taken votes to leave the ELCA. At Zion, Cobleskill the initial vote failed. Three congregations – St. Mark's, Middleburgh, Evangelical, Gallupville, and First, Lyons – have all had initial votes that have passed. In addition, Nile Lutheran Mission, Rochester, a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community of the synod, voted on August 29 to end their partnership with the ELCA and will be affiliating with NALC. As of August 3, 2010, across the ELCA there have been 504 first votes to leave. 348 congregations have passed their initial votes. Of the 348, 212 congregations have taken their second votes, 199 of these second votes have passed. Of more than 10,300 congregations across the ELCA, less than 2% have voted to leave.

Resurrection people who pray first, walk together and change lives

In Electing Leaders to Serve – At the 2010 Synod Assembly, Mr. Tom Madden, Incarnate Word, Rochester, was elected to serve as the Vice President of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council has already met twice and he is hoping to be present at Conference Assemblies over the next year as his schedule allows. Mr. Fred Risser, St. Michael's, Camillus was re-elected to serve another term as Treasurer.

In Providing Financial Resources - A report regarding the 2010 budget was shared in the September 8 Upstate Update. We're grateful for 73% of synod congregations that made mission commitments in 2010. Of those, 48% are current or ahead with their 2010 mission commitment. This faithful stewardship is key to our ability to continue supporting ministry both across our synod and in the wider church and meet our financial responsibilities. Unfortunately, the decline in mission support so far in 2010 is impacting our ability to be strong partners. Our 2010 revenue as of the end of August is 48.9% of budget, 10% below where we should be at this time of the year and nearly \$100,000 below the 2009 revenue for the same period. Our continued efforts to align with our mission through cost saving measures are working. Year to date expenses are \$144,086 less than 2009 for the same seven-month period. Unfortunately, we anticipate only being able to send a portion of our mission commitment to the ELCA for September. We hope that we'll be able to catch up in the fall.

2011 Mission Commitment forms have been sent to congregational presidents and pastors. If you've not received yours the form is available from the synod website. We continue to invite you to grow in your support for the ministry of the wider church.

In Supporting Leadership Development Through Capital Campaign – Pastor Glenn Schoonover, our Consultant from Kairos and Associates, is working with our Capital Campaign Coordinating Team, led by Pastor Wendy Buckley. At Synod Assembly we learned about *Feed the Roots of Leadership*. You will hear more about this in the months ahead and you will be invited to support this campaign which will support leadership development for the church through outdoor ministries, campus ministry and seminary scholarships. If you'd like to learn more about supporting this campaign contact Pastor Buckley.

In Telling Our Story – In recent months the Upstate New York Synod has become more connected through social media. Think Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. We view these resources as tools that help us remember that we're walking together through the connections they help us make to one another. In addition these tools help us to tell the stories of God's work that is being accomplished through our hands in the Upstate New York Synod. We hope you'll visit the synod website and follow the links to "Like" us on Facebook, "follow" us on Twitter and "subscribe" to us through YouTube.

We Change Lives

Starting with Our Own! – In July, a group of 14 people from the Upstate New York Synod made the journey to our companion synod in Zimbabwe. Four of the group also traveled to Zambia (ELCZa) to witness Pastor Alfred Chana's installation as Senior Pastor of the ELCZa. The travelers, who attended churches, stayed in homes and built relationships with our brothers and sisters in our companion synods have begun sharing their stories and pictures. More are sure to come. It's clear from what they've shared so far that the biggest changes have been in the perspectives and understandings that these travelers have brought home with them. In the coming months the synod's Global Mission Team will be working to identify ways for continued sharing of stories as well exploring ways to explore more opportunities for congregational twinning relationships so that even more lives can be changed through these global relationships. We give thanks to Pastor Janet Griffiths for her years of service as chair of the Global Mission Team as she leaves that position and welcome Beth Walker, Bethlehem, Fairport, as the new chair.

Stay informed

Sign up for the Upstate Update – the e-letter of the Upstate New York Synod by contacting Neal Fischer at nfischer@upstatensynod.org and visit our website at www.upstatensynod.org



Resurrection people who pray first, walk together and change lives

A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE