



A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE
Conference Assembly - Fall 2013

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2



What can you tell us about the Bishop-elect?

by: Rev. Marie C. Jerge, Bishop

The election of a new presiding bishop at the Churchwide Assembly

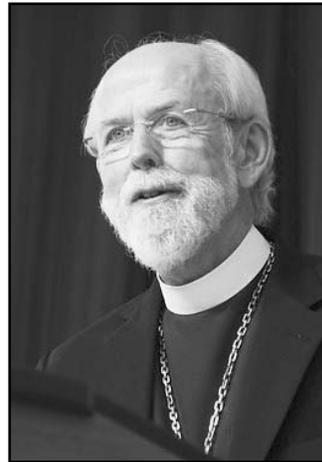
was a surprise for almost everyone, but there was a strong sense that **Always Being Made New**, the Assembly theme, was taking shape before our eyes. Many described it as the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is well-positioned to guide this church into the next chapter of its ministry and mission. She is a collaborative leader. She is down-to-earth, a quick thinker, well-spoken and has a great sense of humor. She is highly respected



by her colleagues and has built solid ecumenical relationships in Northeast Ohio Synod during her tenure as Bishop. Her ministry is grounded in Scripture, Lutheran Confessions and Church History. Several of her interviews are available

on the ELCA website and these interviews are congruent with this leader that I have known since 1984. Her installation will be held on Oct. 5, 2013 and she takes office on November 1.



We continue to give thanks for the strong leadership of Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson through the last 12 years. His articulation of the faith in the public arena and his steadfast patience and attention to healthy process during many tumultuous debates and assemblies have been exemplary. Many

times during the assembly people gave him standing ovations in recognition of his service to this church.

Other actions of the Churchwide Assembly are available through <http://elca.org/assembly>. Comments from Upstate New York Synod voting members were published in the Upstate Update and are available by visiting <http://upstatenysynod.org> and use the search feature for the word "reflections."



Mission Tables

by: Rev. Judith vanOsdol, DEM, Assistant to the Bishop

This is the designation we are using for the groups of people (lay and clergy) who are working together across the synod and with the churchwide organization to help re-imagine and re-shape mission on our territory. There are two sets of tables – one set is focused on congregational mission and the second on mission support and stewardship. Below you will find a short description of each of the groups and some of their current tasks. The groups have not yet been finalized and there are openings for more participants, but we already have more than 50 individuals who are engaged in this shared ministry.

Mission Table for Congregational Development, New and Renewing Congregations:

- One Synodical “Table” focused on synod mission strategy.
- Four Regional Renewal Teams focused on working with congregations:
 - Team West (NF/ SW conferences),
 - Team GFL (GFL conference),
 - Team Central (CC/ ST conferences) and
 - Team East (HM/ FH conferences).

The Regional Renewal Teams’ work may include the following areas:

- Accompanying congregations with tools for renewal: the goal is healthy, vibrant, missional congregations
- Working with Congregational Assessment tools and Mission Planning
- Shepherding area strategies and partnership conversations
- Overseeing new mission starts and congregations under development
- Recommending congregational renewal including formal redevelopment when appropriate
- Coaching and developing leadership through mission schools and education programs
- Walking with congregations through process of Holy Closure when necessary
- Accountable to: Deans, DEM, Synod Council, Synod Staff
- Launched in May, 2013—teams are now meeting regionally and online

Mission Support/“Stewardship Team/ Table”—one Synodical Table, composed of clergy and lay leaders from every conference. There are four working groups: Leadership Development, Stewardship Education, Mission Interpretation and Mission Support.

Mission Support Working groups are focused around the following tasks:

- Leadership development—stewardship coaching and training
- Stewardship Education—introducing materials and resources to the congregations, including Stewardship survey, Macedonia Project, etc.
- Mission Interpretation—visiting all congregations over the next two years
- Mission Support—developing relationships and networks toward sustainable mission and ministry in the synod
- All groups encouraging and developing a growing mission support network of grateful and generous giving, through congregational visits, Synod challenge, stewardship education.
- Accountable to: DEM, Finance committee, Synod Council, Staff.
- Launched in June, 2013—working groups and teams are meeting online.



Walking & Talking Together

Stay connected with your synod. Find events. Get the latest announcements. Receive updates about healthcare changes, the upcoming elections, important assembly updates and more. Get the synod news that matters to you delivered to your inbox. Signing up for the Upstate Update is fast and easy! Just visit <http://upstatensynod.org>, scroll down the right side and enter your email address today.

A number of people have commented on how useful the resources and articles are that we are including in **The Lutheran** magazine inserts. Thanks to a grant received by **The Lutheran**, a limited number of issues that contain our synod newsletter have been provided to congregations who have not been receiving copies of the magazine through the end of this year. To continue to receive our inserts next year, you will have to subscribe to the magazine. The synod plan is available at \$3.95 per subscription and includes the issues with our inserts.

Lutheran Disaster Response

by: Patsy Glista, AIM, Assistant to the Bishop for Operations

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America brings hope and healing to those affected by disasters in the United States and around the world. The program is delivered through local affiliates. LutheranCare in Clinton, NY serves as the local affiliate for LDR in Upstate New York. Activities so far this year have included:

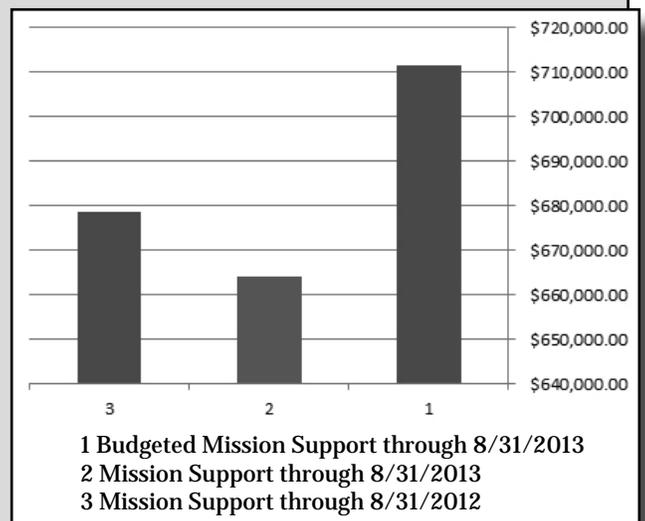
- Continuing our long term recovery partnership with Schoharie Area Long Term, Inc. (SALT) including \$35,000 in financial support;
- Schoharie County visit in Feb. 2013 from Rev. Joseph Chu, Assistant Program Director for LDR at Churchwide;
- Providing \$17,100 in financial aid for unmet needs of individuals/families related to Hurricane Irene;
- Partnering with other response organizations to the June 28, 2013 flooding in upstate New York. This work continues as communities move toward implementation of long term recovery rebuilding. National LDR has provided \$25,000 in funds toward long term recovery efforts in Fulton, Herkimer and Oneida Counties.
- Congregations and individuals have donated over \$4,500 toward unmet needs for the 2013 floods. These dollars are being matched by Thrivent Financial with \$1,500.
- More than a dozen of our congregations have come to central NY to help with flood clean-up and rebuilding. Congregations and members are the hands and feet who deliver and support LDR's work.



Walk Together: Finances

Financial challenges continue in this fiscal year. THANK YOU to those congregations current or ahead in their mission commitment! Congratulations once again to Southern Tier and Southwest Conferences: 100% of their congregations have given mission support already. Support continues to lag behind the 2013 budget and compared to 2012. At the end of August, total mission support for the year was \$663,959. That's \$14,546 down from the same period in 2012 and \$47,700 below our current year's budget projected mission support for seven months of the fiscal year.

Your mission dollars help to take God's word and care into the world. Through synod and the churchwide organization mission dollars allow us to work with congregations, nurture leaders, support our camps and campus ministries, develop mission resources, and assist outreach, global and urban ministries.



Feed the Roots of Leadership

Feed the Roots of Leadership Fall 2013 Update

by: Rev. Joe McGarry, St. Mark's,
Baldwinsville

Every time I visit Vanderkamp I am overwhelmed by the positive atmosphere that surrounds me. Over the last five years Vanderkamp has transformed not only my life, but the lives of my family and thousands of people across New York. Outdoor ministry was a very important part of my call to ministry and I am witnessing the power it has on the young people of our church today. Cayman Burke is a member of King of Kings in Liverpool. He has been going to camp since he was in elementary school he said recently, "Vanderkamp is extremely important to me. I am now on my 13th year here and this camp is the world to me. I chose my college major because of this camp and to imagine life without it would really have changed who I am today." Sara Manning from Trinity Lutheran Church in Herkimer feels like camp is a second home to her. She says, "It is a place where I feel loved and totally fine with being myself. I love

the atmosphere and the people here. I want to work here forever." Not only do people feel good when they come to Vanderkamp but they experience something greater than themselves. Sandra Simmons is a college student who grew up going to St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Camillus and she sees the importance of Vanderkamp in her life, she says "Vanderkamp, is so important to me because it creates a positive, welcoming atmosphere where anyone can come as they are and experience God's love." Feeling loved, accepted and wanted, is important for many of the counselors Vanderkamp. The young people who attend the camp feel loved by God and the people around them which creates a safe space to explore their faith and to connect with God. Alex Gross from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Fayetteville sums it up nicely. "Camp is important to me because it is the most loving place I have ever found. I find myself doing the more crazy stuff in life because I feel like I am loved and supported to do so."

Feed the Roots of Leadership Capital Appeal is in its last year heading toward a final celebration at the 2014 Synod Assembly. Your donations are already making a difference in support of outdoor ministries, campus ministries and seminary scholarships. More than \$291,000 has already been distributed, and put to work, in ministries nurturing tomorrow's leaders. Gifts and pledges to date bring our total to over \$750,000. People are available to come to your congregation and share the excitement about Feed the Roots. Call Feed the Roots Co-chairs, Pastors Wendy Buckley or Jeff Hedin or Patsy Glista to arrange for someone to come to your church or to obtain promotional material.

